War in the Classroom

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IN THE CLASSROOM

ANDREW NIEMEIJER

A Qualitative Model for
the English Literature Curriculum

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WAR IN THE CLASSROOM

A Qualitative Model for the English Literature Classroom

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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Who could tell what the future would believe? We expect too much of the future – hoping that it will quarrel with the present.
(Julian Barnes 2016, 48)

Being young is a kind of warfare in which the great enemy is experience.
(Andrew O'Hagan 2020, 3)

Foreword and Dedication

There's something in the air. It is 2014, and a balloon gently drifts towards my school, a monumental building in the 17th century trading port of Hoorn, departure point for many of Holland's infamous adventurers, sea-captains, war heroes. Passing across the many masts of the vessels of our brave new century, its journey comes to a halt, right above the schoolyard. Peacefully gliding towards Dutch ground, the balloon drops to the surface and into the lives of the pupils of my school, the OSG West-Friesland. A seemingly innocent children's toy, yet there is a label attached which bears a dark reminder of days long gone, of the Great War that passed by the neutral Netherlands. There is a shout as a teenager spots the balloon, and a gaggle of boys jump to the opportunity this presents. As they mass outside, in the cold, ready for a winter's match of football, they stop in their ways to let Clemence past, much loved and respected custodian of our school. Picking up the balloon, she opens the letter attached to it. Reading it, the pupils stand and stare at her, frozen in time. They see a tear trickling gently down her face. Suddenly, Clemence snaps out of her trance and is instantly aware of the host of pupils watching her in awed silence. Quickly, rubbing her cheeks, she folds the letter, and walks purposefully through the throng of pupils and into the main building, to a small but cosy room on the right-hand side of the 150-year-old building, snugly fit next to the Fast Lane English classroom. I turn as I hear her knock and read the childishly scrawled letter she has thrust into my palms.

> They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old:
> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
> At the going down of the sun and in the morning
> We will remember them.
> (Binyon 2014, 43-44 and on balloon-tag)

Interrupting my tentative design of a curriculum of war literature that quiet winter morning, this message from across the North Sea, scribbled in a young pupil's handwriting, wrenched me from my work. These century-old canonical lines by war poet Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) magically propelled me to the Last Post Ceremony under the Menin Gate in Ypres. There, visiting dignitaries are invited to come to the centre of the Hall of Memory during the daily remembrance service, and read aloud the fourth stanza of Binyon's 'For the Fallen,' a part of the ceremony called *The Exhortation*. Little did I know then that some years from that moment, holding the blue balloon and watching Clemence's tear-streaked face, I would be invited to do the same, in honour of my long-standing educational efforts in the Ypres Salient to which I had taken so many generations of Dutch pupils.

This war poem's airborne arrival at my school, the OSG West-Friesland, exactly a century after the outbreak of World War I, revealed to me the incredible power of literature, triggering tears from my colleague and shocking and awing an entire schoolyard of Dutch teenagers into stunned silence. This is the power of poetry, scribbled onto a piece of paper by a British pupil and arriving via balloon from the country so deeply embroiled in remembering and commemorating the Great War. Teachers have an obligation to engage with humanity's (violent) past, and here a poem has forced that past upon me as an educator. My pupil's memory is like that balloon that drifted into their lives that day, 'unmoored' and part of what Andrew Hoskins defines as the 'careless memory' of this age (Hoskins 2011, 19). This book is a result of my resolve to battle this 'careless memory' by using literature to anchor memory in schools.

To the reader of this book, I wish to stress that the outset of my ambition to foreground literature and reframe it as a central tool to address the rising tide of society's wish to address urgent issues at school, of war, of conflict, of trauma, of Holocaust, started out much like the balloon's journey. In many ways, I feel like the young British primary school pupil from the village of Worksop near Sheffield, shakily holding the vulnerable blue balloon before its launch into the vast skies.[1] This pupil had chosen to arm his tender vessel with nothing more than a poem scrawled on a piece of paper and send it on its perilous journey. With no exact outcome or trajectory, there was small chance of it successfully landing in the hands of any reader, let alone an overseas one. Little could the youngster have dreamed that the fragile airborne poem would incite such far-going reactions in the pupils and staff of a school in the Netherlands. Like the pupil scribbling

Binyon's poetry on the balloon-tag and letting it go with the wind, facing the gargantuan gale-force of science, politics and society and their wish to influence the way teachers teach about urgent issues, such as war in the classroom, I choose literature as my weapon to do so.

This dissertation will show how teachers need to hold on to moments such as these when they occur and seek ways to embed both the event (balloon) and the literature (Binyon's poem) in their curricula. Yet it is my academic reader who will also want to understand how this is done, how urgent issues such as the topic of war can be addressed in the classroom in an innovative way. At various points in my research this will necessitate me to be a literary historian, an educational theorist, and a teacher at the same time. Donning these three roles it will instantly become clear to my academic reader upon perusing my dissertation that the tone and subject matter of this book are, therefore, unusually personal. This choice is a conscious one, in my effort to translate academic language and concepts to actual classroom situations and vice versa. Thus, I will serve my academic reader by analysing and applying Kate McLoughlin's (2011) tropes of war to a variety of classroom situations, specifying which literary tropes work well, but also when and how. Seeking ways of establishing a new multimodal literary curriculum within which to integrate my research, I invite a veteran to the classroom, I integrate what Lennon and Foley (2010) define as 'dark tourism,' and I show how to design interactive innovations to the literary curriculum which integrate canonical and non-canonical narratives. Further bolstering what is a literature-based form of research I will apply Gert Biesta's academic vision on education, in a bid to make these literary innovations culminate in the establishment of *Bildung*. With the daily practice to intervene in, this book is very much the product of a teacher researcher. I acknowledge my personal style is unusual for a dissertation, yet I believe it is necessary, tapping into my knowledge and experience as a teacher and bringing it to benefit academic lacunae on this front, proposing how the literature curriculum ought to be renewed at Dutch secondary schools and beyond.

As an English teacher in the Netherlands, I am only marginally required to integrate literature in my curriculum.[2] With this book, however, I will take my reader on a journey foregrounding a multimodal breadth of literature: poetry, prose, movies and blogs, art that has sprung from the ashes of the major wars of the 20th and 21st centuries, World War I and II, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War and the War on Terror. Doing so is an extensive broadening of my curricula and thus I will move far beyond the remit of what is

required of modern language and literature teachers in the Netherlands. However, a different, more creative design of the (language) curriculum is needed urgently, to rise up to the increasing demands upon education, and the challenge of involving society's pressing issues of citizenship at schools, and part of the general curricular overhaul in the Netherlands entitled Curriculum.nu. This book is aimed to function as a flywheel to achieve this. It is the result of an extensive re-draft of my curriculum, culminating in the design of a qualitative literary model, which emphasises the importance of literature and literature education in schools.

In emulation of Clemence that wintry day in 2014, picking up the balloon and reading its poetic message, I hereby invite my teacher-reader to pick up this book and let it inspire likewise. Though my focus is purely on war literature, I will design a series of literary educational interventions leading up to a qualitative model which allows for easy thematic shifts to other pressing topics such as, for instance, racism, gender or climate change. Moreover, I will also show my (teacher)reader how I ventured to integrate Dutch literature (in translation) in my English curriculum, thus showing that my literary curricular suggestions are not only multimodal and thematically interchangeable, but also interdisciplinary. To top that, my journey includes visiting the battlefields and places of memory and mourning, which will allow even further cross-curricular enterprises with subjects such as History, Geography, and the Arts. This dissertation is the product of my roles of English teacher and researcher commenting on my own teaching. It is a testimony of my personal journey and my growth as a researcher and teacher of literature. The qualitative risk I take will inevitably allow quantitative lacunae to surface. And yet I aim to convince my reader that my uncommon style and approach have allowed a uniquely broad scope. Thus, I hope to inspire a future generation of language teachers to follow in my footsteps, its flaws an encouragement to research more exacting readings from my results.

More than anything else, therefore, this book is an offering to all teachers and teachers of Modern Languages specifically. Yet what is a teacher without his or her pupils? The results of my journey in this book could, logically, never have been achieved without several generations of students, several of whom feature prominently in this book. All pupils have necessarily been anonymised throughout and will remain so here. Amongst them are

those who fled this new century's 'school[s] amongst the ruins,' quoting Adrienne Rich (2004, 22-25). To 'Natasja' from the Ukraine, 'Sara' from Baghdad, 'Sami' from Damascus and 'Ceylin' from Aleppo. To those who went to fight and rebuild those bombed-out schools like 'Aagje' and many pupils like her. This book is dedicated to those for whom our school was their daily battle and the classroom a literal battlefield, the daily rota a march through no-man's land for survival, to all 'fight class' pupils and those like them. To those who dared to march away with me to the darkest corner of humanity, who dared to fill in the empty space after August 1, 1944, shouting out from Bergen-Belsen their echo in history, the 'Semi-Matured:' you know who you are, thank you in all respects for the 'magic moments.' To those many pupils who allowed themselves to succumb to the 'insidious disease' (Hislop, Brown, and Beaver 2009, 45) that once swept through the ranks of the British army, writing war poetry, 'Brenda,' 'Anthonia,' 'Ingeborg,' and the many generations like them. To 'Hendrik, 'Margje' and all of you daring to venture outside school, curriculum and timetable, meeting a veteran and engaging with him. To the students that delved deeper, young researchers of war stories, losing themselves in their hearts of darkness yet coming out at the other end, like 'Petra,' 'Hendrika' and 'Andreas.' To all my pupils of the past and to those in the future, I salute you all.

To the teachers that taught you, like Angeline and Jeanette, and to those who taught me, like 'Meneer Lam' and 'Meneer van As,' thank you for sparking the flames. To those who will keep on teaching you, like Jacco, Maureen, Selma, Chiara and Michael, with whom I have shared so much in and outside the classroom, and teachers like Gijs, Melanie, Merwin, Nico, Richard, Marcel, Katharina, Tinka, Ryanne, Jamal and Hester, notwithstanding the flames of our English department, Solomon, Jenny, Lynne, Lisette, Richard, Joanna, Paulette and Nathalie. I hope this book will inspire you to keep on taking our pupils beyond curriculum and classroom. To those who support teachers daily such as Carlo, Sandra, Sorcha, Kees, Wim and most of all Teun. To Willy, Marnix, and above all Marija: you deserve the most special salute of all, safeguarding my resources, checking and updating my armament, reloading my rifles when I was lost. To Ewoud, Jawek, Babs, Roel, Alistair, Klarijn, Toni and Ton, for providing the final polish and preparing me for the final push. To the teachers that let me teach them and test my fragile weapons like Beatrice and Dick and fellow University teacher-teachers Anna Kaal and Sebastiaan Dönszelmann. To the National Congres of English in the Netherlands and Adrian Barlow of the English Association (UK), for their trust, allowing me to inspire, explain and find

fresh teacher-recruits. To the celebrated teachers, the ambassadors of education, whose passion for good teaching is their armour when they face the force-fields head on in the limelight; Lucelle, Jan-Willem, Daisy, Rogier, Marjolein, Joke, Conrad, Mathijs, Jan, Susanne, Diederick, Dirk and most of all Jasper, Tingue, Christa and Mattijs. I name but a few here, but to all of you, I salute you and stand in awe. To those in education I had the great luck of meeting and who had the grace to teach me about leading teachers and teaching an army, like Annet Kil-Albersen. To those who lead and safeguard the community of schools, like Peter Snoek, whose trust in teachers is unflinching and whose care for our school is boundless. To those who inspire teachers to come out of their classrooms and into the lime-light, of science, of politics, of society and claim their rightful spot behind educational policy's steering wheels, like Lian Pattje, Fred Santing, Bert Groenewoud, Audrey Wilschut, Pieter Leenheer and Alexander Rinnooy Kan. To my former Secretary of State for Education, Jet Bussemaker, who had the common sense and decent courtesy to solve a problem by asking teachers. I thank her and the Ministry of Education for their trust.

To the veterans in my life like Peter Vogel, who gave so much and whose beautiful scars throb still, rubbing off on me, and the sons and daughters of veterans in the classroom, like 'Jacoba,' who have learned to live with them. To the veteran-teachers who go out of their ways to play their songs of war in the makeshift classrooms of the world, like Brian Turner, please never cease to sing. To those who plan and provide home, shelter and guidance when teachers take their pupils to the road, like Alexis in Edinburgh, Stefaan Vanderstraete in Ypres, and Ellen Weijand and Esther Visser in Breda. To front-line guides such as Ian Connerty and Jan Matsaert of the Last Post Association in Ypres, and their buglers who will forever play their Last Post. To the veterans and volunteers of Talbot House in Poperinge, for a warm fire, a mug of hot tea, a piano and a song of war to shed a tear by, thank you. To the one man who out-drives any Hemingway wartime ambulance, taking me and my pupils from Scottish to Flanders' fields, to all the bus drivers in the world like trusted Koop Steenbergen, who never tire taking students to the battle zone. To education's tireless war-reporters, such as Ton de Jong, distilling beautiful truths from the mud and blood of education. To the men and women in life's dressing stations, like Sybolt Hakman and Eddy Reefhuis, who lap up life's soldiers, teacher-researchers like myself, binding their body and soul's wounds and listening to their stories. To my one-

time comrades-in-arms Adrian, Dirk, Amrita, and to Martijn, whose wounds proved too deep to heal. To his living memory: may you rest in peace.

To Dick Schram, for lending the final and vital hand to the big push. To my captain, my friend, my inspirator, my co-pilot and most of all, my teacher; Diederik Oostdijk. But for men like him, there would be no future scholars to inspire the world and make it a better place. To the teachers and veterans who raise us, and those who raised me, my Grandpa Mackie and Opa Niemeijer, their wives Granny and Oma, and the teacher-veteran whose life and legacy lit the first flame, great-grandfather Robert Laird Mackie. To my family, in all its width, in England, Germany and the Netherlands, with a special mention of thanks to Auntie Rosemary and sister-in-law Kerstin for their special spark of support and inspiration, and to all the families who suffer when teacher-soldiers go to war, pen in hand, and patiently guard the Homefront, keeping the fires burning. To my brothers and sister, sharing parents we share life's battles, Janey, Miley and Alistair, thank you for being a given. To my band of gentlemen brothers, Floris, Jerrit, Jasper, Dirk, Stefan, Ingmar, Erik and Michiel, for letting me choose you to share all of life's battles with ever since our teenage days, as we continue our march together. Thanks to Raoul and his Marlies, for being a sister to me and our soldiering gentleman friends. This book I dedicate to teachers, and in doing so I dedicate it to my parents, and the near century of shared teaching between them. Thank you, mum and dad, for raising us and teaching them.

Yet most pressing of all I dedicate this book to the look of recognition in the eyes of the woman I love, our ancestors' opposites in trenches and military march, now together on our roads as teachers. My dear Alexandra, you have taught me most of all, inspired me, you guard and light my life's flame. It is to our sons, Severin and Tristan, who run trustingly and headlong onto the stage of life and its battles, and all the future soldiers and teachers that I offer this book most of all.

For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.
(W.H. Auden 2009, 89)

Forty-three years old and the war occurred half a lifetime ago, and yet the remembering makes it now. And sometimes, remembering will lead to a story, which makes it forever. That's what stories are for. Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember except the story. (Tim O'Brien 1991, 34)

1. Introducing War in the Classroom

Designing Literary Curricular Answers in Education to the Pressures of Science, Politics and Society

A drum, a drum, here they come walking, shouting, gargling down the narrow school corridors, bumping into each other noisily, raucously. Everyone talking excitedly, bags on the table, friends sitting together, slapping each other's backs boisterously, while the girls let out high pitched wails and laughs, comparing summer tans and updating social media statuses. I am a thirty-seven-year-old teacher of English and I feel like one of the three witches, meeting on an educational heath. Or perhaps I am Macbeth, and this gaggle of teenagers are the witches multiplied. Like the Scottish general of legend, with close to a decade worth of teaching done I am a seasoned campaigner in the Dutch educational battlefield. Yet I feel daunted and disorientated. I wonder if I will be able to work my battle magic on my students this school year, because the events of the summer have shaken me. For, just one month previously, the Dutch experienced their own 9-11. On July 17, 2014 a Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 was shot down by a Russian rocket across Ukrainian airspace, killing all of its passengers and crew, amongst whom were 196 Dutch citizens.[3] In a world where traditional global powers seem to become destabilized by the minute,

Islamic extremist terror attacks and a return to Cold War relations between the West and Russia being recent examples, the shooting down of a civilian aircraft over a European war-zone might prove to be fuel to the fire.

It was against this volatile and violent backdrop that my secondary school pupils returned to school, and this particular 6th form class to my long-established First World War poetry course I had taught for close to a decade in Vwo 6.[4] The historical parallels with the century before, 1914, were striking: that summer it was exactly 100 years ago that a European deadline expired, plummeting all the great powers into war. I was not alone in wondering whether the shooting down of flight MH17 might set in motion a chain of events comparable to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand a century before, eventually leading to World War I.[5] While this did not happen, at the time, such dark prophesies made me shiver. Despite my experience in the classroom, I felt anxious about teaching my same old war poetry course after that summer's calamity. For what place and meaning could the poetry of World War I, or war literature more generally, have in the lives of students living with daily images of war, terror and the traumatic incident of July 17, 2014 fresh in their minds? In the wake of these heated events, I was concerned about the effect, if any, the course would have on my pupils. Putting war narratives on their English curriculum, what role do I play as an English teacher when I address war in the classroom in these troubled times?

Chances were that these pupils in front of me might have known someone on that fatal flight MH17, I realized, surveying them as they became more and more silent. This was my cue. It is the benefit of being a student and they know it. Their expectant eyes all fixed on me, hoping for a curriculum that would inspire them and a teacher that would guide them safely through it. It is the first time these boys and girls have come together since the summer, ready to share their own experiences and learn anew. In fact, there is no other place in society where teenagers of all denominations come together like this: at school. Although events of calamity and conflict such as these ostentatiously seem beyond the remit of a teacher of English language and literature, I felt an acute responsibility weighing upon my shoulders to overcome my anxiety and address these sensitive issues. Having taught generations of pupils First World War poems that are 'as familiar to us as hymns' (Duffy 2013a), I felt I could not sit idly by and leave the pervasive cultural legacy of the war poets unexplored.

Moreover, I was in a unique position to do something about it, having been awarded a Ph.D. grant for teachers from the Dutch Ministry of Education. My research would be a combination of educational theory, literary history and the daily teaching practice.[6] The first immediate question that sprung to mind was how I could entice my students to examine the role war narratives might play in their daily lives vis-à-vis the realities of past and present conflicts and calamities such as flight MH17? Leaving my bag next to the table, papers and pen on my desk, computer in start-up mode, I faced the 31 pupils in front of me.[7] "Ladies and gentlemen," I said, opening the lesson with a clear voice, "we…are…at…war."

1.1 The Climate of War and the Pathos Formula

At the time of writing the height of the remembrance years 2014-2018 has just passed. And it is against this backdrop that I taught the generation above and subsequent classes. Just more than a century ago the guns of the First World War fell silent on the killing fields of the Somme, Verdun and Ypres. Sadly, many guns have been fired since, on the battlefields of World War II, Vietnam, Iraq and the Middle East in the War on Terror, proving World War I to be anything but *The War That Will End War* that its politicians, academics, and citizens hoped it would be.[8] It is a sad irony that while commemorations were being organised in memory of 20th century wars, Dutch and British air force fighters lifted off from their NATO bases to unleash their deadly load on the war-torn Middle-East in their 21st-century battle against the Islamic State. It goes to show that 'war is not an occasional interruption of a normality we call peace' as Samuel Hynes claims, 'it is a climate in which we live' (1998, xii). Small wonder that commemorative dates cross our collective Western calendar in a mishmash of events. Longstanding events such as 'Memorial Day' in the United States, 'Remembrance Day' in Britain, and 'Nationale Dodenherdenking' in the Netherlands, while their origins spring from the American Civil War, the First World War, and the Second World War respectively, have all incorporated more recent wars to their collective commemorative goals.

And so, besides the daily images of conflict that pupils have to live with whenever they turn on their TV, look upon their mobile-phone, or open a newspaper, they have war's wide variety of anniversaries to contend too. 'Anniversaries are given a hard sell,' Fran Brearton (2014) claims, and rightly so. The 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War in

2008, the 10th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks in 2011, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the Allied landings in Normandy (D-Day) in 2014, all were marked by multiple commemorative events and were televised globally. The 'hardest sell' of all was given to the centenary of the First World War. It was extensively covered in British media right from the start in 2014, and Dutch media soon followed suit. Academic publications and conferences on the topic significantly increased, as well as anthology war poetry publications, (reissued) novels, films, documentaries, museal exhibitions and theatre productions, notwithstanding a flourishing of war tourism in Ypres and the Somme. In short, we are at present in the middle of what Andreas Huyssen (1995, 5) calls a 'memory boom.' According to Huyssen, the core of the blame lies with a 'virus of amnesia that at times threatens to consume memory itself' (1995, 7). Those who survived World War II are dying out, and all veterans and witnesses to the battlefields of World War I have passed away.[9] Because of this, we are on the brink of a new era in understanding the First World War and the way we remember war in general.

For generations of schoolchildren, Ypres and the Somme have been household names, much like World War II's D-Day. The legacy of these battles has been passed on via the narratives that sprung from them, in all their possible historical, physical, and literary forms. Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka (1995, 125-33) explain there are two forms of memory: cultural and communicative. It is to the first that the extinct voices of World War I belong now that personal stories have died out. The narratives of the First World War have shifted from communicative memory into cultural memory: 'an umbrella term for all those processes of a biological, medial, or social nature which relate past and present (and future) in sociocultural contexts' (Erll 2011, 7). What follows is a vital question: who is now passing on the eyewitness accounts and experiences, the narratives of (this) war, and adding them to our collective cultural memory? More specifically, what are the popular choices and who makes them, and in what form (poetry, prose, film, blog?). The answers to these urgent questions are the starting point of my research. For when narratives or representations are all that is left of the extinct voices of communicative memory, then whoever chooses which narratives are handed on and how, is at the steering wheel of defining the cultural memory of war.

Whenever a teacher places the representations of memory culture, in this case war narratives, at the core of his or her lesson, then he or she is in the process of maintaining and interpreting the substance of memory culture. And this process includes choosing

from a specific set of narratives, which resound very strongly in our collective cultural memory. Narratives which have the 'power to trigger memories,' citing Aby M. Warburg (1866-1929), quoted in Erll (2011, 19). These narratives of World War I have become what Warburg (cited in Erll 2011, 19-21) calls 'pathos formulas': symbols that function as a 'cultural energy store.' Moreover, 'pathos formulas,' Christopher D. Johnson argues, 'help us to see backward and forward in time' (2012, 18). War poets such as Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) and Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) are at the heart of the canon and the British classroom, much like Anne Frank (1929-1945) is at the heart of Dutch and United States' education. Reason enough to make their narratives the starting points of the first chapters of this book. My suggestion is that their canonical narratives have turned into 'pathos formulas' of the cultural memory of the World Wars and all subsequent wars. Not only do these 'pathos formula' war narratives make the memory war come alive in the classroom, they simultaneously flash forward in time as a metaphor for current experiences of war. Using Warburg's theory, this book will examine how teachers might empower war narratives beyond their form in the 21st-century classroom, defining, maintaining and preserving memory.

In this 'climate of war' (Hynes 1998) in which we live, the way we remember our past wars may influence the way we write about, fight and commemorate our present wars. Teachers play an important role in this process. Astrid Erll (2011, 28) states that cultural memory is 'tied to material objectivations' and 'maintained and interpreted by trained specialists,' by whom Erll exclusively means 'priests', 'shamans' and 'archivists.' This book will show why teachers need to be added to these authorities on memory. Because the art that has sprung from the ashes of war, its poetry, prose, film and blogs, is what teachers put on their curricula. Given their potential power as pathos formulas this comes as no surprise. The urgent question that arose was how and why, considering the full multimodal width of war narratives, had I as a teacher of English come to teach the specific set of First World War narratives for almost a decade? This is why the first tentative steps in this book mostly involve the work of the literary historian. I will analyse the process of canonisation of World War I poetry in the following chapter, aiming to uncover the influences on and of education on this process. This I hope will allow me to reflect critically on my current curriculum and those of my fellow English teachers, and make a step towards designing other literature curricula myself. I will aim to find tangible

links to my current dilemma, facing the challenge of teaching First World War poetry in the 21st century and its conflicts and calamities such as the downing of flight MH17.

This book is a testimony to my continued quest for answers, starting with the above, and spanning out towards different wars since 1914 and different narrative forms beyond poetry in search of ways to teach pupils about war and thus broadening my scope. At various points my research will necessitate me to be a literary historian, an educational theorist and a teacher. I will indicate why this is necessary at each of the junctures of this book. For now, it is important to indicate to my reader that every so-called 'eerstegraads' or first level teacher in the Netherlands is by law both an MA-qualified educational theorist and MA-qualified in their field of teaching, in my case English language and literature. Without these qualifications, I would not be allowed to teach the exam year upper level 'Havo' and 'Vwo' pupils at secondary school in this country.[10] Both the academic skills of the literary historian and the educational theorist converge in my daily practice of teaching. They are, to me, a symbiosis in my profession which my (Dutch) teacher-reader will recognize. Yet for those readers outside of (Dutch) secondary education, begging their patience, I will strive to separate the three different roles which oftentimes amalgamate easily in my teacher's practice and thoughts, and thus in my research.

1.2 Interventions in the Classroom and McLoughlin's Tropes

"We…are…at…war." Back in the classroom I realise that the shock of my opening statement has awed my class of Dutch sixth-form students into total silence. Their 'Vwo' exam is the only in Dutch secondary education the passing of which will allow them university entry, and with just two fifty-minute lessons per week in a class of more than thirty students, I have no time to lose. The statement to them feels like an untruth, it upsets them: they cease their whispers and are all ears. Behind me, the beamer shows photographs of the MH17 pieced together in a Dutch hangar, and a Dutch F-16 fighter aircraft taking off to contribute to a US-led coalition bombing Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq. As I let the visual confrontation with Dutch war(s) in the air sink in, I hand out two poems written by former Poet Laureates, Dutch Anne Vegter (1958-) and British Carol Ann Duffy (1955-). I explain that Duffy wrote her poem, 'Last Post,' as a response to the death of Harry Patch, the last living British veteran of the Great War. Meanwhile, I

confront them with the present 'memory boom,' introduce Huyssen's theory and its academic, political and social implications. 'And while you were tanning yourselves on Europe's beaches,' I add, 'the newspapers you carelessly browsed through were filled with specials on the First World War centenary and images of the MH17 disaster.'

By now the sweat was dropping steadily down the back of my spine. Until this moment, my classroom intervention was based on my experience as a teacher that shock and awe tactics like the example above tend to make a class receptive, or at least meek. Yet these were temporary measures, and could backfire just as easily, especially when I pushed the wrong buttons and made pupils too emotional. For my next step I could draw on my expertise as a literary historian, choosing the two poems by Vegter and Duffy in the hope the these 'pathos formulas' would somehow magically do their work; my first steps as a researcher. Basically, I was acting on a hunch as a teacher, and thus treading way beyond my remit, straight into no-man's land. My purpose was to create a contrast to what I supposed was their summer idyll until 17 July 2014, by reading Vegter's 'MH17.' The poem was published in a leading Dutch newspaper two days after the MH17 was blasted from the sky, and would later that autumn be read out by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte during a televised national commemoration service:[11]

> Watching the news twenty times and still it remains
> true: flown into someone else's web of war, just like that.
> […]
> Watching the news twenty times and still it remains
> murder. Searching for the fabric of this sudden story. You find
> the word, *who cares* whether it exists or no. Globalsorrow.
> (Vegter 2017, my translation)

During my very first steps outside of my traditional curriculum of First World War poetry I clung to the hope that Warburg's theory of the 'pathos formula' would work. The power of the poem by Vegter as a trigger of my pupils' collective memory of what was, arguably, an act of war, was tangible, their individual attention thus far highly strung, I felt their silence pierce me, their eyes betraying emotions simmering under the surface. Going on a hunch, this was more than I had hoped of this class of teenagers in their final exam year. I had chosen a specific set of war narratives to achieve this because I hoped

they would 'trigger memory,' quoting Warburg, thus empowered beyond their form, releasing their energy into the 21st-century classroom. Having made our first steps in a war poetry curriculum, I followed this up by carefully engaging my pupils with some theoretical background – Huyssen's 'memory boom' – and confronted them with the pervasive 'climate of war' (Hynes 1998) in which they live and have grown up. Next, I was anxious to broaden their view and extend their emotional engagement to the poetry of World War I. 'The narratives of wars of the past might tell you something about war in the present,' I explain, illustrating this by handing out Carol Ann Duffy's 'Last Post,' which opens with these lines:

> *In all my dreams, before my helpless sight*
> *he plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning*
> If poetry could tell it backwards, true, begin
> that moment […].
> (Duffy 2013b, 112-13)

And ends with these:

> You lean against a wall
> your several million lives still possible
> and crammed with love, work, children, talent, English beer,
> good food.
> You see the poet tuck away his pocket-book and smile.
> If poetry could truly tell it backwards,
> then it would.
> (ibid.)

Poets in Duffy's poem are powerful and none more so than Wilfred Owen, whose lines from his most celebrated poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' literally open 'Last Post' and figuratively close it as the poet closes his now blank 'pocket-book' with a smile. Since there are no more living witnesses of World War I who can tell us what it was like to fight, suffer and kill in the trenches, my pupils and I have to rely on Duffy, and her embedded Owen. Because time's arrow is redirected in 'Last Post,' the story told 'backwards' by moving the

narrative to a fixed point of peace *before* the battle, the effect on the characters in the poem, British soldiers and the poet (soldier) in their midst, is twofold. Firstly, thus fixed in time forever the soldiers may live and dream of their future lives. Secondly, the poet in the poem can 'tuck away his pocket-book and smile,' for poetry is not needed now, implying both that peacetime neither evokes poetry nor has a need for it, whereas wartime does. The power of the British Poet Laureate's poem is that she replaces the lost voices of World War I with both her own (poetic) voice and that of the best-known poet of the Great War, Wilfred Owen. Her poem implies that it is through Owen and her poetry that the story of the veterans of war lives on, beyond the death of Harry Patch, the last living veteran of the Great War. That legacy is carried into the 21st-century.

By this time, I was in need of more reinforcement to back up my very first interventions in the classroom. The first lessons, engaging with Duffy and Vegter's poetry, had shown Warburg's theory of the pathos formula to have its effect in the classroom. Yet these examples of literary pathos formulas were genre specific, questions surfacing from the use of these narratives of war during the intervention revealed they needed academic answers characteristic to their genre (war) and form (poetry). I was grateful for the time afforded me through my teacher's Ph.D. scholarship, for my academic research into the work of Kate Mcloughlin gave me valuable new insights into applying war literature in a secondary school setting. McLoughlin (2011, 17) has suggested that since all wars share specific characteristics, war literature revolves around similar tropes of 'epistemology, scale, space, time, language and logic.' This tantalising claim immediately opened new multimodal registers for me as a teacher. No longer bound by the form of my traditional curriculum, I would be able to start using novels, diaries, and movies, perhaps even the blogs of war.

Moreover, if my first steps building my new war literature curriculum proved successful, I could broaden my scope and venture to develop varying topics to a set of war literature curricula for different school levels, featuring different conflicts. The qualitative choice to do so is purposeful and supersedes the benefits of a quantitative approach. Besides enabling my teacher-reader to pick and choose from the plethora of literary interventions that I present in this book for their own benefit in the classroom, I hope to inspire future teacher-researchers to gain more exacting readings from their own experiences and with the quantitative research that my initial explorations deserve.

With these multimodal literature curricula burgeoning in the back of my mind, I went back to the intervention at hand to put one of McLoughlin's tropes to the test. By telling the story backwards, 'Last Post' does not tell the story that Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est' does: a graphic account of a soldier's slow death as a result of a gas attack in the trenches of the Western Front. In 'Last Post' the attack never happens, and by not writing about war Duffy's soldiers are 'released from History.'[12] This deliberate 'circumventing [of] the direct depiction of conflict,' Kate McLoughlin argues, is a 'literary means of intentional avoidance,' which she defines as a 'diversion' (2011, 139). Duffy makes clever use of such a 'diversion,' creating space for an alternate reality, a 'million lives still possible,' and thus indirectly accentuating the huge losses of the war: millions of lives of the soldiers 'crammed with love, work' and their potential 'children'.[13] I will return to McLoughlin's tropes of war throughout this book and show where and when the technicalities of her tropes might benefit teaching my pupils war literature. I will use McLoughlin's tropes to connect all war literature as part of my methodology, marking their use throughout to the benefit of my teacher-readers.

Meanwhile, back to the intervention in the classroom, armed with McLoughlin's tropes, the empty space the British Poet Laureate leaves in her poem alerts my pupils' inquisitive minds and they start filling in the empty space Duffy's 'diversion' has left them. Questions start to form as they interweave the memory of two wars with each other. Ironically, my students want to know what *did* happen, before they were diverted away from death and the soldiers in the poem 'walk away,' feeling like they are the 'younger brothers,' who do 'not enter […] the story now, to die and die and die' (Duffy 2013b, 112-13). Inadvertently, these teenagers are attracted to that moment that 'shrapnel scythed […] to the stinking mud,' and want to continue telling the story *forwards*, to become part of the secret, to gain knowledge of what it would be like, to be there in battle, to fight and to kill (ibid.). Parallel to their unexpected reactions to 'Last Post' is the equally eerie fascination amongst my pupils when they try to picture what it must have been like to fall ten kilometres from the MH17 aeroplane, to be blasted out of the sky. Unable to keep their curiosity under wraps, some pupils even asked whether passengers were still alive when they fell from the plane. Was this reaction due to catastrophe being much closer to home than World War I? There were three pupils in that class who knew someone on the plane, and one girl was a Russian refugee from war-torn Ukraine.[14] As for all of them, despite

their summer holidaying, they were profoundly moved by the live televising of the first of the Dutch victims' bodies arriving at Eindhoven military airport.

1.3 The Beautiful Risk of Intervening in the Classroom

The poems two Poet Laureates had written in commemoration of conflict struck a chord with my sixth form pupils. When I saw them a week later, they were philosophising loudly as they entered my classroom on the possibility of World War III, still filling in the empty spaces the poetic 'diversions' (McLoughlin 2011, 139) had left. Pupils seemed both horrified by and attracted to calamity, in all its gruelling detail. It was time to channel this open nerve of war, pervasive yet just below the skin in Dutch society, and the dichotic attitude of my pupils towards it. With a forward push I handed out the poems 'MH17' by Arnoud van Amerongen (19-) and 'Aftermath' by Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967).[15] Van Amerongen's 'MH17' is a poetic reaction to the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight and its 196 Dutch passengers, with an aggressive anti-Russian undertone.[16] Siegfried Sassoon's 'Aftermath' was written after the war had ended and Sassoon had officially left the army in March 1919, though in reality he had been back in England since the previous summer (Moorcroft Wilson 1999, 525). The century-old warning words of a World War I veteran against the onset of war amnesia:

> But the past is just the same – and War's a bloody game …
> Have you forgotten yet? ...
> Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.
> (Sassoon 1983a, 143)

I deliberately contrast with the very recent 'MH17' by the angry van Amerongen:

> How long will the West remain naïve
> corrupted by economic interests
> intoxicated by Russian gas
> it keeps longing for diplomacy.[17]

'There can be no area of human experience,' Jon Stallworthy writes at the start of the centenary commemorations in that same tumultuous year (2014, xxi), 'that has generated a wider range of powerful feelings than war.' How true this is I notice immediately in the effect of these two poems on my pupils. Many take offence with van Amerongen's jingoist tone, calling it a 'childish' and 'aggressive' poem, with 'simplistic metre and rhyme scheme' which should 'not be taken seriously.' Others voice their outrage at Sassoon, refusing to let a century-old war and a dead poet's poem act as some kind of warning to their 21st-century lives and 'those bastard Russians who shot down MH17.' Drawing on Assmann and Czaplicka (1995), Sassoon's 'Aftermath,' a war narrative from the canon of 'cultural memory,' can be brought in direct dialogue with 'MH17,' a war poem part of very recent 'communicative memory,' mediated via my pupils. The result is that an emotional cocktail of anger, apathy, shock, sadness and worry has risen during this English literature class. The four war poems I have thus far discussed in class have uncovered a 'climate of war' (Hynes, 1998) prevalent under the skin in Dutch society, a nation not known for their emotional forwardness.

Having bitten the bullet, I overcame my anxiousness by choosing to involve current events of conflict. I was convinced I was on the right path. The newly awakened engagement of my pupils with current conflict and the poetry that sprung from it had a positive effect on the way pupils engaged with First World War poems. Acting without any clear set of instructions yet feeling as if I was required to do so anyway, I wish to emphasise to my teacher-reader that I continued to struggle inwardly, like many teachers do, with notions of worthiness, credibility, scope, impartiality, and relevance. Of course, the pathos formulas made my tentative literary steps in the classroom feel relevant, and McLoughlin provided the necessary scope and impartiality. The initial success of both in the classroom increased my credibility, and feelings of worthiness, providing me with a driving force to continue along my chosen path. Yet feelings of misgiving also continued to linger. What if I had stirred a hornet's nest, and was stung for my troubles? What would I undertake with this potentially dangerous cocktail of diverging reactions to the poems I had set in class? This was the most exciting and problematic part of the course I had set and taken. It would prove tough to guide my students as they analyse these war poems' literary, emotive and perhaps even political quality, and the vast array of individual truths this exercise might subsequently unlock. At this point in time, I had no idea what the

outcome of the course would be. I was taking an enormous risk. And it is precisely this 'beautiful risk of education,' quoting Gert Biesta (2013), which is under severe scrutiny.

Reflecting on modern times and its acts of war within my English class on war poetry is my answer to what for teachers oftentimes feels like an avalanche of critique from a variety of societal, political and academic force fields. 'They want education to be strong, secure, and predictable,' Biesta explains, 'they want it risk free at all levels' (Biesta 2013, 1). Society, specifically the general public, increasingly demands from teachers and schools that they solve 'all their children's problems.'[18] Politics, and its Ministry of Education, is ardent in its demand for teachers to shed their anxiousness and address difficult subjects such as Holocaust, trauma and war in their classrooms, as well as detecting radicalism at an early stage. Science, in this case literary historians, is critical of the way teachers supposedly enforce stereotypes or even myths of war, by teaching a specific set of canonical poems. In other words, as a teacher of English I am not just supposed to teach a language, 'policy makers, politicians, the popular press' require me to do so much more (ibid.) Yet besides being told to take 'the risk out of education,' the frustration teachers like myself feel is that they are given no clear instructions whatsoever how to achieve all this (ibid.) For any first step to solving any societal, political and scientific issues myself, without neglecting my core tasks of teaching my Dutch pupils English, will involve risk. My tentative step addressing the trauma of flight MH17 and the legacy of (the Great) war by putting a specific set of poems on my teacher-designed curriculum is a case in point.

The lessons above interweave World War I and the centenary commemorations a hundred years later with 21st century's bloody repetitions of conflict such as the Ukraine and new commemorations that spring from war-tragedies like these. The poetry of Poet Laureates Vegter and Duffy is consciously publicised at the heart of commemoration. The BBC asked Duffy to write a response to the death of Harry Patch, and politicians such as Dutch Prime Minister Rutte read out part of Vegter's poem during the national MH17 commemoration.[19] Thus the representations of memory and those that create them, in this particular case war poems and their poets, have played and still play a monumental role in defining our memory of war, present and past. 'Education only works through weak connections of communication, of interruption and response,' Biesta (2013, 4) explains, and herein lies the risk. Whatever the use of these poems in class might lead to,

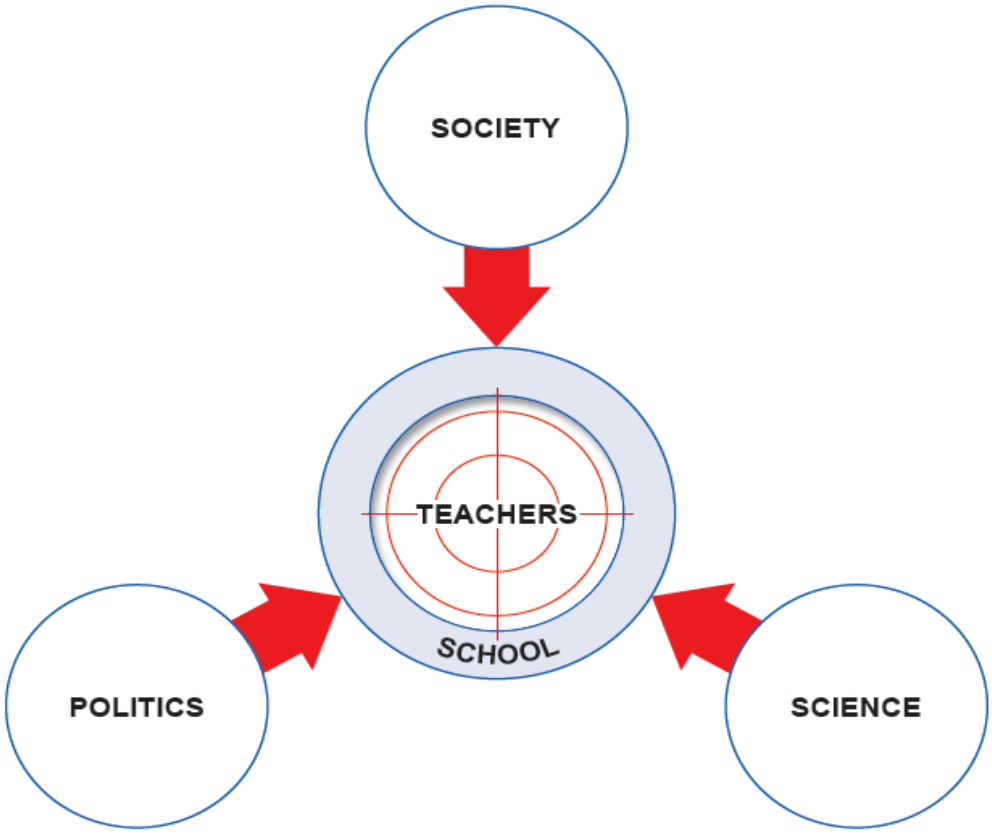
and whatever the building pressure and scrutiny schools are under, the task we face as teachers is massive.

Taking the beautiful risk via a wide variety of qualitative literary interventions in the classroom, this book will show how I responded. Clearly marking them for my teacher-reader throughout, these interventions are both explorative and intuitive, fruits of my exploration to seek ways of using English literature as a gateway tool to addressing issues of citizenship concerning war, trauma and the Holocaust. Doing so, I purposefully choose not to limit myself to a single intervention. Thus my research will not quantitively test and measure effect, but rather, qualitatively measure and describe classroom effect. Thus I choose a more intuitive and wider scope, the great benefit being that it will allow me to examine multiple classes, generations (1st to 6th year students) and levels (Havo, Vwo and Fast Lane students). Moreover, it will allow me to explore beyond what I have known and taught for many years: First World War poetry. The research in this book will allow me to break through the glass ceiling of my double MA degrees in English and Education and move beyond a tradition or even groove of teaching war poetry. By exploring the multimodal possibilities literary and non-literary texts of the war that followed the Great War, I aim to break free in more ways. Though my approach is from the outset a qualitative and explorative one, I will aim to make tentative steps towards the design of a literary model by which to measure and outline my literary interventions for the benefit of my teacher-reader.

Importantly, this research places literature at the heart of education as a hands-on tool in a bid to face the steadily rising cries of help from the force fields of society, politics and science in dealing with conflict and war, and debates about memory or mythmaking. 'Attempts to separate individual memory, tradition, history or fiction from memory,' Astrid Erll (2011, 7) argues, 'prevent us from seeing the threads that connect such phenomena'. It is these 'threads' between the disciplines that run through the corridors and hallways of schools, as pupils follow these unmarked threads from door to door every working day. These are not just the interdisciplinary doorways, which are woven with each other through an average pupil's daily rota. As the examples from the classroom above have shown, from the individual door of every student, to the collective door of the school, memory, whether it is personal, cultural or social, converges at school. Teaching language and literature is, therefore, an integral part of memory culture, 'all those

processes of a biological, medial, or social nature which relate past and present (and future) in sociocultural contexts' (ibid.) It is at schools that these processes unite.

Schools are the last bastions of shared cultural experience in the world. There is no other roof, in this age of secularisation and individualisation, under which all the colours of our society converge. In the past, people had church, government, and media to tell them what to think and to teach them civic tasks. Now there is just school. What follows is the over-arching argument of this book, that schools are a super-structure of memory culture. Collective memory is a 'socially constructed notion,' Maurice Halbwachs explains. 'It is, of course, individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that group context to remember or recreate the past' (Cozer 1992, 22). Teachers play a central and defining role within this structure. The 'socially constructed notion,' of which Halbwachs writes, is created by teachers at school, who I argue belong to the 'trained specialists' on memory that Astrid Erll (2011, 28) singles out. This book will show that the 'specific group context' of the school remembers and recreates the past. This explains why, for the various force fields outside of education, the stakes are incredibly high to influence education. For whoever controls memory and the past controls today and the future. What follows is an analysis of the way the force fields of science, politics and society invade the classroom, specifically moving to influence how, what, when and where we teach about war.



1.4 Society's Stake in the Classroom

Think only of international terrorism, war in the Middle East and the refugee crisis, MH17 and the Ukraine War, set against a background of growing populism and economic inequality, and destabilizing traditional global powers. The twenty-first century 'looms like a repetition: one of bloody nationalisms and tribalisms, of religious fundamentalism and intolerance that we thought had been left behind in some darker past' (Huyssen 1995, 8). It seems clear that one of society's most pressing and perpetual concerns is conflict. Set against this background, society, that is to say, the social community or general public, is in search for a collective focal point where and with which to discuss and perhaps solve issues of conflict, terror and extremism that have of late risen so starkly to the surface. Understandably, it has turned to the universally shared cultural collective organisation called school for help. 'The humanitarian and democratic tradition is at the core of the teaching profession,' Fred van Leeuwen (2016) argues.[20] Schools are the last place in society where poor and rich, Christian and Muslim, gay and straight, native and refugee converge. A complete mirror image of the general public, schools are the only place where

pupils from all walks of life come together, sharing and creating experiences with each other.[21]

To cast a look upon a class of school pupils as teachers is to have society's concerns mirrored back at you. This is one of the most delicate and daunting features to a teacher's work. Moreover, as I have argued above, these worries that pupils face coincide with society's social calendar that is littered with war memorial events, making the climate of war in which they live complete. As if this was not enough, Dutch society seemed to be in the process of appropriating the British cultural memory of World War I, which owing to Dutch neutrality, was something of a forgotten war. Since there are no Dutch veterans of World War I, logically, there are no Dutch narratives of this war to relate. Yet in emulation of British media, Dutch media have focussed on the historical, political, cultural and literary aspects of the Great War, with the commemoration points in the calendar as a guide through these four years, taking over, for example, many of the 2,500 hours of BBC television and radio broadcasts at the start of the commemoration period.[22] Moreover, the World War I themed production *War Horse* (Elliot 2014) transferred to the Netherlands, screenings of World War I films such as *Paths of Glory* (Kubrick 1957) were organised in the Dutch Film Museum, and, to mark the centenary, a leading Dutch magazine provided a guide to British First World War novels.[23]

In short, when these British narratives of World War I swamped the Netherlands at the onset of the centenary commemorations, so did the memory of the First World War. The point here is that this, in turn, has pervaded Dutch education. An ever-increasing number of secondary schools in the Netherlands have started to include First World War poetry in the curriculum of their English language classes. Moreover, recent research into what the Flemish call 'commemoration tourism' of Ypres and its salient surroundings, the so-called Westhoek, has shown a doubling of the number of visitors to the area in 2014.[24] Unsurprisingly, the British form the greatest group of foreign war tourists. Yet the second biggest group of foreign nationals to visit the sites of World War I commemoration in the west of Flanders are, more surprisingly, the Dutch.[25] And the majority of these Dutch visits are school related. At the start of the centenary, I had already taken a decade's worth of pupils to the former battlefields of the Ypres Salient. As I have stated above, in the following chapter I will analyse the anthologising and canonisation of World War I poetry, and the influence of and on education in this process. A first tentative step, my aim is to re-evaluate and re-write a First World War poetry curriculum for the 21st century. Given

the precedence of British memorial events in Dutch society alongside their own, I vowed to integrate the coming field trip to Ypres as classroom intervention in this process.

The landscapes and memorials of the First World War are storytellers of their own: from the Ypres Salient to the Somme, war tourism is flourishing like never before. The thousands of memorials that have been erected in the church and town squares of Britain and across the battlefields of Europe have become important representations of memory with their own specific narrative, especially during commemorative years such as 2014. Andreas Huyssen (1995) calls these 'mnemonic convulsions of our culture,' which in his view have become 'chaotic, fragmentary, and free-floating.' According to Huyssen (1995, 7), they are evidence that society is in need of what he calls 'temporal anchoring,' when 'in the wake of the information revolution, the relationship between past, present, and future is being transformed'. Teachers provide such temporal anchors, not just in their classes at school, but especially when they integrate a field trip to commemoration sites such as those in and around Ypres to their curriculum. This huge increase in visits to 'sites of memory' and 'sites of mourning' as Jay Winter (1995) calls them, or 'dark tourism' quoting Lennon and Foley (2010), is no surprise. Against the background of unstable modern geo-political landscapes, which in turn have had a destabilising effect on Western society, landscapes and memorials become the 'temporal anchors' of which Huyssen writes.

Both the increasing evidence in society of what Andreas Huyssen calls a 'memory boom' and society's prevailing anxieties, focus primarily on conflict. Establishing a value driven curriculum, in which teachers address these concerns, is challenging, yet the importance of the landscapes of war and memorial events, combined with its cultural output in the form of narratives, may be used to achieve this. In this respect, the Dutch play a singular role in teaching British First World War writing. Despite the Netherlands' neutrality during World War I and its ensuing scarcity of cultural output, the Dutch speaking and writing part of Belgium, namely Flanders, *does* have a collective memory of the First World War. What follows is that Flanders' cultural output of World War I is significant and because Dutch is the shared language between the two nations, these narratives are easily incorporated into the broader Dutch-speaking world. Underlining this development is the Flemish author Stefan Hertmans (1951), author of World War I novel *War and Turpentine* (2016), who in 2014 won the most prestigious literary prize in the Netherlands, the 'AKO literatuurprijs.' It is narratives like these, through the bedside

tables of Dutch society, that find their way into the literature curricula of Dutch (literature and language) teachers in the Netherlands.

However, teaching (British) First World War poetry in the Netherlands is likely to happen through the image of existing British traditions. English is to an increasing extent the Dutch second language, further enabling this process. Whereas it comes as no surprise that the cultural divides between Flanders and the Netherlands are more easily traversed than other nations because they share the same language, multiple bridges between English-speaking countries such as the UK and the Netherlands are being built and crossed at the time of writing. In 2014, English language and literature was promoted to a so-called 'core-subject' (*kernvak*) by the Dutch Ministry of Education, one of three subjects besides Dutch and Maths that are thus foregrounded.[26] Besides which, current trends in Dutch educational innovation point to recommendations which include teaching children English from a very young age, at primary school.[27] With the crossing of the language barrier this means that, inevitably, culture crosses along with it.[28] Thus the British cultural calendar is, to a certain extent, added to the Dutch, especially where it already overlapped with Belgium's calendar, such as the remembrance of World War I.

The mishmash of memorial events can lead to a blurring of the cultural inheritance of different wars in different times (World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Iraq War or the War on Terror) and different cultures (British, Dutch, Belgian, American), all amalgamating into one. As I have argued above, national memorial events in the United States, Britain and the Netherlands have all incorporated other wars to their collective commemorative goals. What follows is that cultural expression of these wars, and in this case specifically the poetry which is often embedded within these memorial services, such as poems by Poet Laureates Anne Vegter and Carol Ann Duffy I have used in class, come to stand for all conflict. In other words, the smaller part, a poem on the effect of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the downing of flight MH17 upon a nation in mourning, or the death of World War I veteran Harry Patch, last living British eyewitness of World War I, comes to stand for the whole: all wars and all loss as a result of conflict. Similarly, an excursion to Ypres provides a solid, physical, geographical backdrop, not just to the First World War, but to war in general. Visiting the place which inspired the well-known literary narrative truths of cultural memory, may come to tell pupils of the 21st century something universal about war, about the fears and heroics it inspires, about its horror as well as its beauty.

'Today's education is about giving pupils a reliable compass,' Andreas Schleicher (2016) argues. 'Education is essentially about values.' Needless to say, it is impossible for a school visit to the Iraqi, Afghanistan and Syrian battlefields, nor the Israeli-Palestine conflict zone. This necessitates the search for a battlefield as a metaphor for all battlefields, to open up a platform for society's concerns with regard to conflict, war, trauma and Holocaust into lessons at secondary school. This is why in the next chapters I will integrate field trips as classroom interventions, putting my educational and literary historical research to the test. Taking the beautiful risk and trusting teachers like myself to investigate these paths is the way forward to reforms within the educational system. Involving teachers in their design, according to Schleicher, is essential. He bases his argument on four pillars of education: behaviour, cognition, content and character. In other words, teachers' behaviour and pupils' learning outcome are connected; teachers are thoughtful and sentient beings with characterised intentions, strategies, decisions and reflections. Stressing the importance of the nature and adequacy of teacher knowledge of the substance of the curriculum being taught, it is significant that he underscores that teachers serve as moral agents, deploying a moral, pedagogical craft (ibid.). My research is an integral part of this development, and this book the result of these efforts.

Therefore, in the wake of what Huyssen (1995) writes is 'society's need for temporal anchoring,' this book will offer much needed anchors. Yet teaching war narratives still allows a multiplicity and freedom of interpretation, let alone effect. Within the field of (war) literature, I aim to show how these so-called convulsions express themselves, and how they may be shaped in such a way within English literature lessons at secondary school. By reading Vegter and Duffy's poetry in class, I have established a gateway between past and present cultures of war. In doing so I aim to create a platform for societal concerns to be addressed and discussed in class, not a set of ready-made answers to be dictated to pupils. In my view, society reaching out to education to help cure the concerns their children face, hoping teachers will provide a measured antidote, is symptomatic of the 'mnemonic fever' which has society in its grip (Huyssen 1995, 8). Society is, understandably, in need of answers and certainty, the chaos of the modern age needs its fixed marks. This partly explains the explosion of memorial events in society, because what is created through remembering is a 'sense of sameness over time and space' (Brearton 2014). Society's preoccupation with memory effectuates the integration of these memorial events within schools' walls. Designing curricula which integrate the

landscape of war outside of the school walls will offer a chance to create the fixed, value-driven marks society's children so desperately seek.

1.5 Politics' Stake in the Classroom

In one of the Netherlands' leading newspapers, an article appeared at the start of the commemoration years in 2014. It was fittingly, if somewhat scathingly, titled 'The British hardly know what it is they are commemorating' (Ketelaar 2014, my translation). This Dutch newspaper article referred to a heated debate in British politics, focussing on the way to remember war: are the British celebrating the victorious dead, or remembering the unheroic fallen? Strikingly, it was a former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, who kick-started it. In his article 'Why Does the Left Insist on Belittling True British Heroes?' published in the *Daily Mail* at the very start of the centenary commemorations, Gove (2014) argues that the cultural legacy of satirical television programmes and theatre plays such as *Blackadder* and *Oh! What a Lovely War,* show a one-sided view of World War I.[29] According to the then- Secretary of State for Education, these cultural narratives have helped determine the way the British interpret it: 'as a misbegotten shambles – a series of catastrophic mistakes perpetrated by an out-of-touch elite. Even to this day there are Left-wing academics all too happy to feed those myths' (Gove 2014). As it turned out, it was teachers and their canonical First World War poetry curricula at secondary schools at whom the full blast of the critique was aimed.

The 'gutless' and 'cowardly Captain Blackadder,' under the 'misguided leadership' of 'General Melchett […] is still shown in schools to help children learn about the war!', Tim Shipman raged (Shipman 2014). Addressing a teachers' conference in 2014, Jeremy Paxman argued that 'serving up the poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon was too easy a way of covering the subject and "luxuriated in the horror" rather than addressing the important issues' (Woolcock 2014). Both political journalists Shipman and Paxman added fuel to the fire of a controversy which has since become known as 'Goveadder' (Mitchell 2014). Teachers of English and History have set the poetry of canonical war poets such as Owen and Sassoon, and specifically, more recent narratives such as *Blackadder* on their curricula for decades, and have thus, they argue, defined the way the British remember World War I. In fact, First World War writing such as the 'poetry of Wilfred Owen' might 'facilitate universalised pacifist readings across national

boundaries,' Anne-Marie Einhaus and Catriona Pennell suggest (2014, 14), 'making war poetry 'particularly suited to being taught to international audiences.' The critique thus extends to teachers of English in the Netherlands like myself, it is (international) teachers' supposed pacifist readings of war poetry which the former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, rallies against.

The political critique still confirms literature is central to preserving the memory of war, as is the role teachers have played in this process. By integrating Owen and Sassoon's war poetry and Curtis's television series *Blackadder* into their school curricula, teachers are at the helm of preserving and defining the British cultural memory of the war. What the 'Goveadder' debate implies is that narratives such as these, in the hands of teachers, have downplayed its heroism and the necessity of war whilst foregrounding its futility and loss. A recent and crucial study by Einhaus and Pennell (2014), to which this book is, in part, a response, entitled *The First World War in the Classroom: Teaching and the Construction of Cultural Memory*, confirms that both History and English teachers lay claim to 'teaching the cultural history of the war,' and use poetry to do so.[30] They also conclude that *Blackadder goes Forth*, the satirical TV series Gove so abhors, is widely used as a source throughout both History and English lessons in Britain.[31]

The 'Goveadder' debate suggests that politicians seek political engagement with teachers who place these canonical narratives of World War I at the centre of their curricula. At the heart of this lies one of the most contentious issues of mankind: the validity of war. This is a debate which, as far as the Great War is concerned, 'began before the first shot was fired and has been running ever since. It has spawned a historical literature of unparalleled size, sophistication and moral intensity' (Christopher Clarke 2012, xiii). At the start of the centenary commemorations of World War I, its validity continues to be a hotly debated issue, which former Secretary of State for Education Gove strove to manipulate when its memorialisation was at hand. I have shown how 'policy makers' and 'politicians' want education to be 'strong, secure, and predictable.' In short, they want it 'risk free at all levels' (Biesta 2013, 1). For the force fields outside of education, the stakes are high, for whoever influences and controls education controls memory in the making. Politicians are aware that society's questions and uncertainties about conflict and war are sought in education, at school. It comes as no surprise then, that Ministries of Education like the British try to execute direct control over teachers.

Authorities on memory that they are, it is teachers who are at the helm of defining and choosing the curricular anchors through which to address these concerns.

Considering the power of 'pathos formula' poetry to transcend time, establishing which narratives are taught and how is essential. This is even more urgent in a society that is in the midst of commemorating a century-old conflict while starting and fighting new wars. As Gove (2014) himself reasons, a true understanding of Britain's past 'has never been needed more' in the face of 'great power rivalry' and 'migrant populations on the move' in a dangerous cocktail with 'a fragile confidence in political elites.' As government minister, he was contributing to establishing British stability as a global power, especially in the continuing wake of British contribution to conflict zones such as the War in Afghanistan. The 'Goveadder' controversy shows the political aspect of remembrance, that is the celebration of victory and the establishment of a sense of nationhood, can overshadow the societal, that is mourning the dead. In other words, war narratives which supposedly foreground the horror of war are not good for morale in the voting booth and recruiting office. By using his power as an Education Minister, Gove sought to influence the way the history of World War I is taught and those who teach it, sensitive as he is to the idea that the way we remember our old wars has influence over the way we fight our new wars.

Meanwhile, rising to the defense of (teaching) the war poets and their role in the centenary commemorations was children's literature writer Michael Morpurgo (1943-), author of the First World War children's novel *War Horse*. Britain 'should honour those who died, most certainly, and gratefully too, but we should never glorify,' Morpurgo argues. 'We should heed the words of those who were there, who did the fighting, and some of them the dying,' he insists, such as 'Sassoon, Thomas and Owen. Siegfried Sassoon, [for instance], wrote of 'the callous complacency' of those back home who wished only to prolong the war, no matter what the cost' (Morpurgo 2014). Joining Morpurgo's ranks is the historian Sir Richard Evans (2014), who criticises Gove's 'narrow, tub-thumping jingoism […] in his redrafting of the national curriculum in order to force schools to teach an uncritically celebratory narrative of English history.' In answer to the British Secretary of State for Education, both the writer and the historian rise to the defense of poetry as a way of teaching about the Great War and argue implicitly for its validity as a tool to remember World War I.

Yet it is precisely the war poet Sassoon, whom Morpurgo conjures up to the defence of teaching war poetry, who is also at the brunt of the attack. Sassoon biographer Max Egremont argues the poet helped create a one-sided vision of the war, 'a callous, out-of-touch High Command and the sacrifice of innocents in the apparently unceasing hell of the Western Front,' which has 'made a lasting version of history as well as a writer's world, reaching beyond literary achievement to a national myth' (Egremont 2013, xi). It is precisely this presumed mythmaking, which is under fire from a British government minister at the start of the centenary commemorations in 2014. To make things more complex, the British Education Minister quoted from an article written by Nigel Biggar, entitled 'Was Britain Right To Go To War in 1914?' Biggar, also putting Sassoon central to his argument, claims that the war poet started to feel sorry about his infamous protest against the continuation of the war back in 1917, 'Siegfried Sassoon himself admitted in 1945 that "in the light of subsequent events it is difficult to believe that a peace negotiated in 1917 would have been permanent" (Sassoon, cited in Biggar [2013a, 4]). 'In defence of war,' Nigel Biggar deliberately uses the image of a repentant anti-war poet to back up his argument.[32]

What neither side of the political debate mentions, is that Sassoon's character is well known to have been dichotic. Although he was a prominent speaker at pacifist rallies throughout the 30s, Sassoon also wrote some of his best battle prose during this time, in which the reader will encounter a melancholic yearning for the warmth, simplicity and camaraderie of his days in the army.[33] As Patrick Campbell (1999, 36) points out, Sassoon was possessed with an 'extraordinary courage', his 'fury' often had an 'edge that verged on the maniac.' Small wonder that the so-called 'anti-war' poet was 'known as "Mad Jack" by his admiring men'. In short, Sassoon was ambivalent about war and dichotic in his attitude towards military conflict. In this he is not unlike that other prominent war poet: Wilfred Owen. His most famous war poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' has always been read as an indictment against war. Yet its composition was followed not much later by a letter to his mother, describing how he fought like an 'Angel' wearing a 'smile' on his face (Owen 1967b, 580). It is this 'homicidal background' to the war poets which, Chris Yates (2010, 91) argues, should not be underestimated. Bearing in mind the duality of Sassoon and Owen towards fighting, Yates's reminder that both poets were trained killers is too often forgotten.

It is ironic that the facilitators of 'universalised pacifist readings' in the classroom should be soldiers, drilled and experienced in killing. It raises the question who makes the myth: the poet, those who teach his work, those who read his poetry at school, those who frame him politically, or all of the above? Teachers in Britain and overseas are accused of showing only the critical, anti-war side of the canonical poets, although their feelings towards war were not as straightforward as that. The life and oeuvre of a prominent soldier poet such as Siegfried Sassoon is ambivalent. The political force field is as undecided about the validity of war and the nature of the narratives that are created from its ashes as its veteran composers are. Teachers, in their search for pedagogic and didactic answers to the stalemate, need not, and often do not, pick sides in a political debate. I wish to stress that this book will show that the key lies in integrating political debates in literary lessons on war. Take for instance the MH17 classroom intervention. Is integrating the poem which was read out by Dutch Prime Minister Rutte on TV a political act? Has the iconic diary of Anne Frank, like the canon of First World War literature, suffered similar political pressures? Because I aim my investigation of war literature to broaden into full multimodal width and wars since 1914, the same question will arise, as well as the same ambition: to integrate into the lesson political debates foregrounding the importance of literature in education.

Back in the classroom the reactions in my class on war poetry show that the most important myth busting is done by pupils themselves. For, despite all the wise poetic warnings of the so-called anti-war verse of Sassoon and his poem 'Aftermath,' some of my students are still for a direct military confrontation with Russia after reading it. Of course, there are pupils who find the very idea of aggression abhorrent. Salient is the way my Ukrainian pupil Natasja, who fled from war torn Ukraine, refuses to join in the debate. She is most sensitive of all to the post-MH17 situation in the Netherlands, presumably because of her roots as a minority Russian in the Ukraine, because she is the only one who has experienced war at first hand, and because she is still in close contact with relatives in the midst of the conflict. Sensitive to all sides, as a Russian girl, former inhabitant of the Ukraine and now a refugee in the Netherlands, she sought to soothe the atmosphere when I asked her to contribute to the discussion. At this point in the course, she silenced the raucous classroom debate by remarking that picking sides in a war on the basis of reading a couple of poems in class was, in her view, 'childish and impossible.'[34]

What is vital is that my Ukrainian pupil, like Sassoon, has what Kate McLoughlin calls 'autopsy,' 'first-hand experience' which is 'the crucial ingredient of authority, legitimacy and credibility in war reporting' (McLoughlin 2011, 42). This book will show that pupils are particularly susceptible to the power of 'autopsy' and the authenticity that this gives Natasja, their war refugee classmate, as well as the veteran poets of World War I. In the words of Sassoon, both have come 'back again from hell' carrying 'secrets of death to tell,' though it is the poet who has 'loathsome thoughts to sell,' for he is in need of a readership, whereas Natasja is not (Sassoon 1983b, 77). Pupils are attracted to my Ukrainian pupil and Sassoon's stories because they seem salient and authentic. Whether this implies these stories have the power to sway their views remains open to debate. Will students side with Sassoon's supposed moral message or, when confronted with his biography, his dichotic character and Yates's research, will they realize that these authors were killers themselves, and part of what James Campbell (1999, 204) calls a male 'initiated elite'? This will engage students, confronting them with war poetry and how it matters, how it is embedded centrally in a polemic debate, which has divided British politics, society and academics. The goal is not to establish a certain truth about war but to show all sides to 'Goveadder,' making them an active part of it, and using the versatility of a war poet's biography and oeuvre to do so.

Since what is at stake is the way children are taught about war and the sources through which this is done, it is more than fitting to re-create this discussion at schools. The way to give students room to negotiate their own opinions about (the) war, to explore their own views on the narratives of (the) war is by making them aware they are central to the debate. Although the relationship between education and politics in general is based on power, there is interdependency between teachers and their Ministers of Education, which goes further than that of employer and employee. The British Secretary of State for Education is dependent on teachers to apply their expertise to the debate and come up with pedagogical and didactic answers, instead of simply provoking teachers into a corner of dissent against what he presumes is 'Left-wing' teaching. In other words, reiterating Andreas Schleicher, trusting teachers is the way forward to reforms within the educational system, integrating teachers in its design. This process demands a further development of teacher professionalism, at the heart of which, according to Schleicher, is teachers' knowledge base, peer networks and autonomy. He argues for what he calls 'institutionalized collaboration,' the head of the institute being the Secretary of State for

Education, with teachers at the heart of this cooperative process, and to which this book hopes to contribute.

Seen in this light, the former Dutch Secretary of State for Education, Dr. Jet Bussemaker, was a forerunner. In a letter sent to a group of teachers in 2013, Bussemaker calls them to action, to lead in researching ways to teach about war and Holocaust in the classroom. On the one hand, Bussemaker addresses a key problem in teaching about war, namely that teachers experience a certain 'embarrassment to act.' [35] Secondly, Bussemaker asks teachers *themselves* to provide solutions for this problem, to seek ways to teach war, trauma and the Holocaust at schools. I will come back in detail to this call to action by the Dutch Minister, because this book is, for a large part, an answer to her request. The critique of a Secretary of State for Education can feel like a directive force to teachers, more so than the hot breath of society's concerns. Yet politicians like Gove and Bussemaker are sensitive to the power of literature, and both foreground the role education plays, albeit each for their own reasons. And although Gove's critique focusses on teaching the cultural memory of World War I, and Bussemaker's appeal to teachers extends to World War II and the Holocaust, there is no reason why delving into the canonical literature of these wars in the next chapters, should not extend to the narrative output of wars since then, such as Vietnam, Iraq, and the War on Terror. Designing curricula which integrate the political debate which pervades all (war) literatures and its uses in education will contribute to a versatile war narrative curriculum for secondary schools in the 21st century.

1.6 Science's Stake in the Classroom

'Wilfred Owen's poetry is over-rated. There, I've said it,' historian Dan Todman wrote in response to a blog posted in 2009 by the literary critic Tim Kendall, in which he reviewed Todman's *The Great War, Myth and Memory* (2005).[36] 'Like many of his fellow historians,' Kendall argued, '[Todman] thinks that we the general public have been duped. We have been reading Owen and Sassoon, and watching *Oh What a Lovely War*, when we should have been studying our history books.' [37] Todman (2014, 161-63) claimed that the 'priggish' Owen had become 'a remarkable symbol of the modern myths of the war,' which he argued had been propagated by teachers in schools for decades. For, 'with Owen's poems used in the teaching of both English and History, it was in the classroom that the

bulk of the population encountered them for the first time' (2014, 166). Kendall responded somewhat vexedly, arguing that Todman 'dwells on the extreme and occasionally foolish uses to which Owen's work has been put' in the classroom. This, surely, Kendall continues, is 'not Owen's fault,' but it 'is the fault of the […] teachers.'[38]

This academic exchange reflects two important facts about current scientific debates on the memory of war and in this example, World War I specifically. Firstly, it shows how topical war literature is and how contentious is the issue of its use for historical understanding and forming cultural memory. Secondly, it illustrates that next to society and politics, the force field of science also places education and its teachers, those trained specialists on memory, at the heart of their debate. Academics such as Todman are sensitive to and critical of the power that 'pathos formula' literature, in this case the canonical war poetry of Wilfred Owen, has on the way war is remembered, in this case the First World War. Todman comments scathingly that 'relatively short poems which aimed to communicate primary emotions' turned out to be especially useful for 'television producers and classroom teachers (Todman 2014, 171). In opposition, literary critics such as Kendall argue that the debate on the origins and justification of the Great War belongs to history studies, where it should stay. For whatever its outcome, Kendall continues, 'Great War poetry continues to live and sing.'[39] Saliently, whilst this blog-battle between the scholars' rages, historian Todman and literary critic Kendall meet peacefully in their unison of critique on how war literature is taught in schools, shifting the academic debate to education and its educators. In other words, 'poetry makes nothing happen' quoting Auden (2009, 89), but those who teach it do.

Historians such as Todman argue that World War I poetry lessons learned at secondary school are at the basis of a so-called historical myth about the First World War. And literary scholars do not refute this. Not only does this raise the question whether my curriculum is debit to this as well, but also if literature of other wars since 1914 has suffered similar educational mythification. Zooming in, for now, on this specific academic debate on World War I literature, Kendall argues that poetry is not to blame for being 'exploited,' but those who use it are, with teachers foremost amongst the abusers.[40] The way they do so, Fran Brearton explains scathingly, is according to the 'one size fits all' approach: 'war poetry is soldier poetry; war poetry is always anti-war poetry; war poetry is experiential; war poetry, if it is to be any good, speaks from disillusionment, not patriotism; war poetry is meant to shock the complacent public; the war poets have some

kind of shared agenda' (Brearton 2007, 209). At the heart of Brearton's definition lies another, long standing academic debate. In his book *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) Paul Fussell argues that faced with a new set of experiences, a specific group of writers 'created a new "paradigm", an ironic mode of writing which dominates war memoirs' and war poetry (Winter 1999, 345). These literary representations of the Great War, Fussell explains, 'have proved crucial political, rhetorical, and artistic determinants on subsequent life.' Thus, they generated 'a new myth, and that myth is part of the fibre of our lives' (2013, xv).

By continuing to reflect a certain selection of literary representations, that is the canonical war poets, Winter and Todman suggest Fussell has ignored the wider scope of available narratives, and thus reinforces popular myths by giving it scholarly consent.[41] Scholars unite in their views that, armed with these canonical war poets, Sassoon and Owen amongst them, teachers bear great responsibility for creating and upholding a myth about war. Canonical poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon have pushed away other representations, historical and literary, so defining cultural memory of Britain over the past century that they have come to dominate the way the British teach, talk about and remember war. This has resulted in the tradition of propagating the 'one size fits all' approach to World War I poetry at school, and has, in the eyes of Jay Winter (2013), led to what he calls a 'quasi pacifist language,' which dominates Britain to this day. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'pacifism' as 'the idea that all war and violence are unjustifiable and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means.'[42] In other words, the British public, who having been collectively taught canonical poetry written by poets such as Wilfred Owen at school, have therefore supposedly been taught to resist war.

I have shown how the force fields of society and politics put teachers central to a variety of societal concerns and political debates. To claim teachers and their war poetry are responsible for an entire nation's outlook on conflict is taking it a step further. It gives more urgency to the question this book seeks to answer, whether this supposed change of outlook by the hands of teachers and the war narratives they put on their curricula extends to other wars since 1914. A question which this book seeks to answer. Gradually my ambition shifts beyond investigating the anthologising of World War I poetry in the next chapter, as I vow to put another canonical war narrative to the test in the chapter after, yet one from a different war (World War II) a different genre (diary), and different author (Anne Frank). It had, of course, not escaped my attention, that the dominant

canonical war narratives of World War I were poems written by white male soldiers. As Mark Van Wienen explains, the prominence of veteran poets like Owen has led to a 'cult of the soldier poet. […] Not only were soldiers alone capable of writing authentic war poetry but also, they alone were capable of producing a credible critique of war' (2002, 7-8). These poets have come to dominate the genre of war poetry, and none more so than the veteran Wilfred Owen, whom the civilian Carol Ann Duffy so cleverly foregrounds in her 2009 poem 'Last Post.'

Veteran poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen come to the classroom 'carrying secrets of death to tell' (Sassoon 1983b, 77). For my student readers, who do not know what fighting in a war is like, there is always something alluring to a poem about battle. And at the same time, what about pupils who have witnessed war up close, refugees like my Ukrainian pupil Natasja in this class? Her earlier irritation commenting on the political debate as 'childish' seemed to suggest a prior knowledge of what war is like, and foregrounded her irritation with her Dutch classmates, who want to be let in on what is to them an alluring secret. McLoughlin (2011, 42) teaches us that the 'trope of autopsy' is at work here: 'the eye-witness offers the epistemological guarantee *you can believe it because I saw it happen.*' These soldiers had what James Campbell (1999) describes as 'combat gnosticism', they are warriors who know of battle and war from first-hand experience. It explains why combat soldiers have come to be at the heart of telling the story of the First World War. Yet, alluring though this verse may be to a civilian readership in class, canonical war literature is in danger of being read 'slackly' all the same, Desmond Graham (1984, 24) warns. This is because it has become 'normal for English schoolchildren to read Owen and selected contemporaries in secondary school,' Mark Rawlinson argues (2007, 115-116). Students are in danger of claiming to understand what war is like on the basis of reading war literature, which is exactly what has agitated my Ukrainian pupil all this time.

Having become so familiar with canonical war literature at school, the academic concern is that it will become devoid of its power and meaning, and prone to misinterpretation. Letting this literary critique sink in, the teacher in me realised that confusion could definitely occur, between my inexperienced pupils who, reading a war poem, might equate this to knowing or even feeling what war is like, and pupils such as Natasja who had actually experienced war up close. Yet at the same time, what other way was there to let my Dutch pupils know what war for her could have been like, what

fighting in a trench in World War I was like, what fear, conflict and the thrill of the kill was like, other than by proxy of literature in the classroom? There was nothing to it, but to take this critique as a literary historian to heed, let it sharpen my vision as an educational theorist and take the beautiful risk of intervening as a teacher. It is a three-tiered step I will take throughout my entire research of war narratives in the classroom in. The wide variety of interventions in this book I hope will act as anchors to myself and teacher-readers who face the same challenges and have chosen to battle them.

Back in the classroom, I hand out Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est.' Like bullets spat at them from a war and age they leave their mark upon impact in the classroom. The speaker of the poem's harsh words seems to linger in class like the smell of gas, 'smothering dreams;' 'we flung him;' 'white eyes writhing;' 'hanging face;' 'sick of sin;' 'blood gargling;' 'froth-corrupted;' 'cancer;' 'cud' (Owen 1990a, 117). My pupils have dimly heard of the gas-attacks in Syria and Iraq.[43] The Dutch are involved in war there, as these students let Owen's words sink in, bombing their war-torn lands.[44] 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is a poem which unsuccessfully protests against all wars, Martin Stephen argues, because 'the imagery and diction of Owen's poem, with its gas attack and 'five-nines' is more clearly that of the First World War than in almost any other poem he wrote' (1996, 204). However, contrary to what Stephen suggests, it is these details which makes the poem come alive for my students, it is this detail that shocks and lures them. Besides, it is highly questionable if the use of '9N314M-warhead' instead of 'five-nines' would have made pupils understand its content better, even though this was the missile fired at the MH17.[45] They are confronted with the 'autopsy' of a poet who has seen the terrible effects of a gas attack, a weapon still used in wars today. 'War is too huge to see close-up,' Kate McLoughlin (2011, 58) argues, but with 'Dulce et Decorum Est' you only get the close-up. Consider the use of words such as 'flares,' 'fire,' the evocative 'Gas,' and the rushed, nervous fitting of the 'clumsy helmets;' these features are not unique to World War I. Neither are the speaker's haunted dreams of the dying soldier, 'guttering, choking, drowning.' These are details, which ensure my students feel closer to the action described in the poem, as if they are experiencing what war is like with the speaker.

McLoughlin identifies 'details' as one of the six tropes of war that characterize war narratives. 'Paradoxically,' she explains, 'the massive scale of war finds its best communication in localized, focused images recuperated from the generality' (2011, 72). McLoughlin's tropes of war prove a useful tool to understand what it is that makes a

certain war narrative grip a student-reader's attention. Already during my first months as a teacher-researcher, McLoughlin's tropes prove a reliable method to jut my very first qualitative and intuitive educational interventions with. It merits a return to her analysis as a method within the interventions in the classroom, the teacher-anchors throughout the chapters in this book, and with conclusive detail in chapter five. Without having witnessed it themselves, the details of this pathos formula war poem, with its power to transcend time and space, allow my pupils to become voyeurs of war. It is the details of war that appeal to my pupils, and not the famous Latin tag with which Owen ends his poem, which teachers stand accused of using as the ultimate anti-war statement, a pacifist warning corroborating the futility of war.

'Dulce et Decorum Est,' the former Prime Minister David Cameron replied, on being asked what his favorite poem was. 'Its incredible power' was 'an eye-opener' which continued to move him today, he explained (L. Thomas 2010). *Daily Mail* journalist Liz Thomas remarked sarcastically that 'Dulce et Decorum Est might be seen by some as an unusual choice for Mr. Cameron when thousands of British troops are still serving in Iraq and Afghanistan' (ibid.). However, former Chief of the General Staff of the British army Sir Richard Dannatt explains First World War poetry's popularity amongst serving soldiers. 'I think Owen's poems, many of them, do speak to me and my contemporaries as soldiers because he was a soldier, […] he went through very earthy and very gritty experiences' (ibid.). It is precisely these 'earthy' and 'gritty' experiences that appeal to student readers as well, in their endeavor to approximate the experience of war without actually having to enlist. The details of a gas attack, and its graphic effect, written with the authority of the eyewitness, is what makes this poem stand out above others, not its supposed 'anti-war' message. Taught in the 'traditional' way, Owen's poetry is meant to 'shock the complacent public,' Brearton (2007, 209) suggests. Whatever way I teach it, Owen's canonical poem is still new and fresh for my pupils and does exactly that: it shocks them.

For my pupils, 'autopsy' depoliticises Sassoon and Owen's poetry. The fiercest of their so-called 'anti-war' poems and the reason why they attract young readers at school is not because of any supposed moral lesson, but because they are witnesses, allowing students to become voyeurs of the unknown: the killing fields. To student readers, the 'signs of combat experience enhance [war poets'] accounts' (McLoughlin 2011, 43). 'We have been happy to teach our children that writers like Owen and Sassoon were noble in their expression of pity, grief, indignation, and anti-war sentiment, we have been less

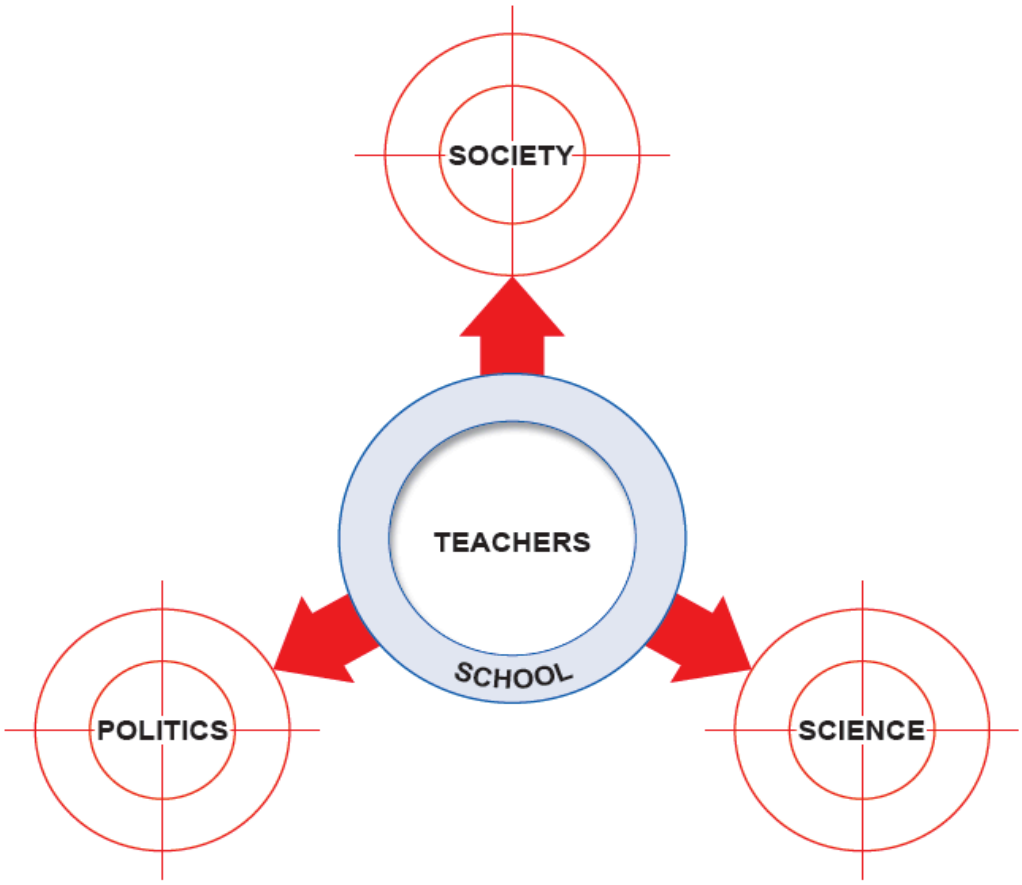
forthcoming about their positive responses to war,' Adrian Caesar writes (1993, 2). As I have pointed out before, both Sassoon and Owen were ambivalent about war, they 'not only saw killing done but killed other men themselves' (Chris Yates 2010, 90). I illustrate as much to my pupils by showing them the letter Owen wrote to his mother, describing action in battle that won him the Military Cross, just like Sassoon had earlier during the war by capturing a German trench singlehandedly, slaughtering its occupants.

> I captured German Machine gun and scores of prisoners […] I shot one man with my revolver (at about 30 yards!); The rest I took with a smile… (Owen 1967b, 580)

Owen's gruesome details of war in 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' are as shocking and alluring to a reader as is his letter, especially to students. They come very near to the soldier-speaker's age, potentially 'ardent for some desperate glory' as they might be themselves (Owen 1990a, 117). Looking at my pupils in class, reading the poem, I can sense a measure of excitement in their faces, including my Ukrainian pupil Natasja, reading these war narratives. 'In this work there is a celebration of war as a vehicle of pain and suffering,' Caesar explains, 'shared by the voyeuristic reader who peeps at the horror through parted fingers and is consciously or subconsciously thrilled and excited by it' (1993, 2). Realising that it is precisely this voyeurism that takes effect with pupils will help teachers understand why students are drawn to the blood and gore of battle narratives like moths to the flame. Gary Weissman, coining the phrase 'non-witness,' explains that these 'non-witnesses desire […] to actually feel the horror' (2004, 4). It is a pedagogical effect I will examine throughout, and in close detail in chapter three. I vow to research whether war narratives in their full multimodal width, whether any war story, whether film, blog, poem or diary, might have the same effect. Will an element of thrill be prevalent with my pupils, when viewing a war movie in class, or when travelling to a former battlefield or Holocaust site, or perhaps even when talking to a war veteran in the classroom?

Einhaus and Pennell (2015, 78-79) show that whereas history 'teaching goals are a far cry from attempting a simple moral lesson and promoting a knee-jerk reaction to the First World War as futile slaughter,' their colleagues from the English department do lay a 'greater stress on [the] futility' of war. When teachers use the poetry of canonical poets such as Owen and Sassoon to do so, then they ignore the dichotic attitude these poets had

in relation to combat. As I will show in the coming chapters, war texts from subsequent 20th and 21st-century wars reveal a similar contradictory relationship to warfare, whatever their form. Examples from lessons I have shown might present a way beyond teaching a so-called 'loss, anger and futility myth' (Galer 2008, 8). For starters, by establishing ties between recent war poems and canonical pathos formula poetry of a former war. By showing pupils how the 'details' of war lure them into the role of voyeur. And by adding the academic critique on the establishment of a tradition of teaching war poetry to the curriculum. It is my vision on education that activating pupils in the academic, political and societal debate and placing them centre stage in their own analysis of war and its poetry, is crucial. It involves a necessary risk and is the starting point of my exploration in this book, and every chapter that follows.



1.7 Teachers in Command: Creating Educational Anchors

It has become clear above, that the demands of society and politics on education are both urgent and exceptional. The legacy and future of teaching literature in the classroom are at the heart of the controversy. But literature also provides the educational anchors for

teachers to become the authorities on memory that they are. War will 'remain a major feature of today's world,' as Graham Galer argues (2008, 6), and 'new myths will continue to develop from the different experiences they create.' Understandably, society, politics and science seek to establish calm control in and of a conflicting world. They naturally seek out the last stronghold of collective memory and bastion of shared culture to accomplish this: schools. The way these force fields do so is prone to change. Politicians come and go, society rarely makes up its mind as a collective, and scholars are forever at loggerheads with each other. All frequently invade the classroom armed with myths of their own. At the moment of writing, it is the contention that war needs to be addressed at school, that only veteran poets are part of the classroom canon, that their poetry is largely anti-war and pacifist, that children are taught that this is the only valid reaction to and interpretation of war, and that teachers are largely to blame for this.

In the midst of this, 'a teacher is expected to teach truth, and may perhaps flatter himself that he does so,' Adams explains 'but morals are quite another truth' (cited in Téllez 2016, 14). Countering the many scholars I have previously mentioned who strongly oppose such teaching, Winifred Whitehead (1991, 70) argues that 'young readers' should be introduced to 'books which, though they may offer some of the excitement and drama which attract young people to reading, nevertheless firmly counter "the old lie", so fiercely denounced by Wilfred Owen.' To give Whitehead credit, I cannot imagine any teacher, nor any parent, minister or scholar, advocating the moral lesson that we teach our children that war is 'good.' The difficulty lies in the moment when we collectively determine that war is 'necessary.' This lies at the heart of one of mankind's most complex questions and is fundamental to what many veterans try to come to terms with through the war narratives they create. Humankind harbours a dichotic attitude towards combat. Pupils and poets are no exception to that rule. In the words of Vietnam War veteran and memoirist Tim O'Brien (2015, 77), 'war is nasty; war is fun. War is thrilling; war is drudgery. War makes you a man; war makes you dead. The truths are contradictory.' As I will show, the war narratives from subsequent 20th and 21st-century wars reveal a contradictory relationship to warfare, with its authors but also with its readership.

This is why what I suggest in this book is a curriculum which 'reads against the grain,' quoting Walter Benjamin (cited in Erll 2011, 22). He uses his criticism of the historicist tradition, which 'yielded solely a "history of victors," to plead for the 'memory of the victims and the nameless' (Benjamin, cited in Erll 2011, 22). In this spirit perhaps

the combat poetry of World War I has been read against the grain so successfully that it has become the canonical mill with which the grain is ground: these soldiers are the victims of war. What student readers might miss, and what my interventions in the classroom seek to foreground, is that these soldier stories are by definition also the narratives of the perpetrators. Andreas Schleicher's (2016) call for value-driven education is key to integrating the aforementioned concerns into an English literature curriculum on war narratives, designed by teachers themselves. Joining his plea, it is vital that this design happens within existing disciplines. Instead of creating a separate secondary school discipline from this need, forcing existing subjects to cut time, current curricula can be reshaped in such a way that they accommodate and incorporate the force fields' concerns. This book argues that English literature, in my case part of a larger English language and culture curriculum at secondary schools in the Netherlands, and war narratives specifically, are an ideal gateway to addressing the wider social, political and scientific picture, involving current global conflicts.

In search of new curricula that integrate the above, and in answer to my former Secretary of State for Education's plea, to find ways to battle educators' anxiousness and teach about war and the Holocaust, I felt it was essential to broaden my view. Kate McLoughlin argues that 'while all wars are different […], all wars have certain elements in common' (2011, 12). This would underscore the idea that by studying canonical First World War poetry, a pupil gets to know not only what this war was like, but all wars, even those in which they might one day fight themselves. These similarities, McLoughlin suggests, surface in the wide variety of war narratives available. At the same time, 'each war has its own poesis, its natural way (or ways) of being represented,' McLoughlin argues. 'It now seems evident,' she continues,' that the First World War's natural form was the lyric poem, that the Second World War's was the epic novel, that the Vietnam War's was the movie, that the Iraq Wars' may well turn out to be the blog' (2011, 10). McLoughlin's claim strengthened my resolve to seek out the similarities between war narratives for the benefit of teachers in their bid to start defining a space for pupils to address issues of war, conflict and Holocaust. Yet it also fueled my growing ambition to address different wars and their different narrative forms since 1914.

Why should I not venture from British canonical poetry of World War I that I had taught so long and stands so central to British education, to rediscover in the classroom the epic and canonical tale of Anne Frank, similarly central to Dutch education? And why

not indeed discover if the Vietnam movie, staple form of the Vietnam War as McLoughlin claims, is similarly central to United States' education? Furthermore, a shift from the poetic, to the diary and into film would allow me to really establish versatile literature curricula, their multimodality allowing me to broaden my creative design and test my Dutch pupils' English language skills in its full width. Whether or not the blog will turn out to be the staple form of the Iraq Wars as McLoughlin suggests will remain to be seen. However, exploring their uses in the classroom as the new narrative form of my pupils' generation, and of a war that is part of my pupils' recent memory, would prove a challenge I was looking forward to taking. Lastly, why not try to invite a war veteran to the classroom, to truly join the stories of his war from 'the past to the future' of my pupils present (O'Brien 1991, 35)?

Combining three roles at all times, McLoughlin as method in hand (literary historian), armed with Biesta to fuel my educational vision (educational theorist), and with the daily practice to intervene in (teacher), I hope my reader will follow me through the chapters of my exploratory literary quest. I will continue taking the beautiful risk and, via a variety of interventions in the classroom, start designing literature curricula I hoped would provide the temporal anchors to address war in the classroom. These I will mark out clearly for the benefit of time-pressed teachers to draw upon in their ambition to establish versatile and up-to-date literature curricula themselves. Concretely, I will apply a variety of literary interventions in classes from a relatively mature age onwards, 16 and above, preferably in their penultimate or final year at secondary school. In the Netherlands that would imply making the curriculum versatile enough to be taught at all secondary school levels: Mavo 4, Havo 5 and Vwo 6.[46] Sixth year Vwo-pupils are closest to a soldier's age, on the brink of university or army life as they are themselves, which will help them reflect meaningfully on the academic reception of their war poems. Teaching at this age would allow both more depth and width to the curriculum, including, for instance, the academic critique as I have previously outlined.

By the end of my exploration in this book, and the interventions in the classroom it describes, I aim to offer my teacher-reader a concrete qualitative literary model by which to measure and outline the literary interventions in this book, as guideline to my teacher-reader in their ambition to design their own. I hope to motivate teachers to explore similar pathways, such as taking students to Ypres, venturing away from Owen in the classroom, moving beyond Anne Frank to Bergen-Belsen, or as inspiration to put

Vietnam War Movies on in troublesome classes, or even inviting a veteran to the classroom. Designing literature curricula, which integrate the landscape of war outside of the school walls, offers a chance to create the fixed, value-driven marks society so desperately seeks as gateway to developing pupil-citizenship. As Einhaus and Pennell's recent research into teaching the First World War in the classroom shows, amongst the most important goals of teaching (war) literature, is eliciting 'a personal response from pupils and developing [their] contextual understanding' of (war) literature' (2015, 79). This is why it is vital to establish a war literature curriculum that allows students to engage on their own terms. It is difficult to predict how pupils will engage with and react to the narratives I will introduce them to. The wide variety of qualitative interventions I will describe in this book, in different classes, using different forms and genres of war literature, will help form hypotheses to their effect in the classroom, with which in turn I hope to invite future quantitative research.

Discussing flight-MH17 with my pupils, Ukrainian Natasja amongst them, has shown that literature might establish gateways between the effect the blurred boundaries between zones of war and peace were having on my pupils' lives, and the possibilities multimodal war narratives gave them to understanding the present. Teaching war narratives in the 21st-century will provide the fixed marks all force fields seek when faced with issues of conflict. I will try to find ways to embed narrative sources into my curricula so that they allow students to make up their own minds and express themselves accordingly. If the former British Secretary of State for Education was right in anything, it was not in his critique that History and English teachers use narratives such as Blackadder in their classrooms; but it is about the way in which teachers apply these narratives that deserves scrutiny. And that includes a veteran teacher like myself, taking generations of pupils to the battlefields of war on pure instinct, without a further thought to what I was doing, with nothing but the voices of the poets to 'undo the folded lie[s]' (Auden 2009, 97). It is in the classroom and in teacher's curricula design that teachers can, may and will form answers to the witchlike prophesies of society, politics and science. Teachers work at the pulse of civilization, beating to the drum to which our collective cultural memory marches on. Education is the last post to which teacher's pipe and pupils of all denominations whistle their collective tune. It is high time to listen to their song.

Having, with bold Horatius, stamped her feet
And waved a final swashing arabesque
O'er the brave days of old, she ceased to bleat,
Slapped her Macaulay back upon the desk,
Resumed her calm gaze and her lofty seat.

There, while she heard the classic lines repeat,
Once more the teacher's face clenched stern;
For through the window, looking on the street,
Three soldiers hailed her. She made no return.
One was called 'Orace whom she would not greet.
(Owen 1990b, 116)

2. Canonisation in the classroom: inventing tradition

The shifts in anthologising First World War poetry since 1914 and the lessons teachers can draw from them

With a soft breeze in their hair and red morning cheeks, the pupils of the OSG West-Friesland make their way through the cold capital of the Netherlands. There, in the centre of Amsterdam, stands the tall, smog-blackened building of the Allard Pierson Museum, archaeology museum of the University of Amsterdam. It imposes a long shadow across the Oude Turfmarkt, just across from where the river Amstel was dammed some centuries ago, and where now the Dutch National Monument for the Second World War towers silently, in the midst of the city's hubbub. With a slight bow of their heads, fending off the biting and wild Westerly wind, these pupils enter the imposing building in awe, saluted by a giant Roman statue welcoming them into the heart of Dutch classical education. They have crossed the marshes of West-Friesland early in their school bus that morning, for they are on one of their very first field trips as so-called 'Gymnasium' students. Its six-year curriculum is designed purposefully for the brightest students with Greek and Latin as extra subjects at school, besides their regular Dutch A-level curriculum.

The museum promises the art objects on display will revive these ancient civilisations. These thirteen-year-olds are excited about their impending walk through time, boisterously babbling their way through the museum's dark corridors, whose walls are filled with banners entitled 'Troy: City, Homer, Turkey.' Excerpts from Homer's

ancient war poem *The Iliad* feature among the ancient artefacts, meant to spellbind the young audience. They leaf through their guidebook, and are somewhat surprised by the loud presence of 'Turkey' and an ancient war story, forcing ancient Rome and Greece's more traditional displays of pottery and statues to the background. My Dutch secondary school pupils read that 'what Homer tells us about the Trojan War in *The Iliad* has an artistic and literary merit that lives on in our present culture. Thus, Troy lives on in memory, because of the battle of West against East, of Europe against Asia' (Murat Süslü 2012, 9). Unwittingly, the pupils have walked into a representation of one of the world's most ancient battles, which has become a cultural icon to Western civilisation, fatally following their own Helen as they do so.

Expecting a traditional classics field trip, filled with Greek pottery and ancient sarcophagi, I am somewhat perplexed at the prominent presence of an ancient war poem at the heart of the museum. My school's annual educational day-out has coincided with a special exhibition organised by the university museum in cooperation with Turkey's Ministry of Culture, celebrating the quatercentenary diplomatic relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey. Homer's epic war poem has been chosen above all other representations of ancient times, in reflection of what this four-hundred-year-old political tie has meant and continues to mean for these two countries. In hindsight, the Turkish-Dutch choice to frame their political relationship in terms of an ancient *war poem*, by putting Homer's *Iliad* centre stage, is given extra prophetic significance, in view of Turkey's failed military coup in the summer of 2016. It was followed by the Turkish government's arrest and dismissal of tens of thousands of civil servants, soldiers and teachers, putting the relationship between 'Europe' and 'Asia' under considerable strain.

My Dutch thirteen-year-olds are thus confronted with 'other shells […] across the Aegean Sea,' quoting Patrick Shaw Stewart (1888-1917): war narratives, being fired across the battlefield of cultural memory (2013, 117). 'Stand in the trench, Achilles, Flame-capped, and shout for me' Shaw Stewart wrote on his anxious way to battle in 1915 (ibid.). Drawing on literature as anchor to stem his fear, he summons 'Achilles,' hero of *The Iliad*, veteran of Troy so very close to the trenches of Gallipoli where Shaw Stewart went to war. With the force fields invading the heart of their classics field trip to Amsterdam's archaeology museum, my pupils like Shaw Stewart were in need of summoning an 'Achilles' too. Armed with their academic and political agendas, these force fields have purposefully set canonical war poems at the heart of a commemorative event

and embedded them in the archive of knowledge: the museum. These poems have been politically framed, in the hope they will influence the general public, pupils foremost amongst them. The question is, in what way? As thirteen-year-olds, they are still impressionable, more susceptible to the influence of what, to them, is a trusted institution, the museum. Betimes unaware of the way the force fields are tugging at them, they have not yet developed their critical skills like their peers in Vwo 6. Our pupils relied on us, their teachers, for guidance.

At this juncture, there were two narrative shells that the force fields of politics and science were lobbing at them in the museum's exhibition. On one side of no-man's land was Homer's Hector, hero of Troy:

> Mass together, then, and attack the ships. If anyone is hit or stabbed and meets his fated end, so be it. He will have fallen for his country, and that's no dishonourable death. (Homer 2003, 266-267)

And, to my great surprise, who should come charging in, as if in vengeance over Patroclus' death, in search for battle with Hector, but the Achilles of war poetry himself, Wilfred Owen. It was only a few months earlier that their peers in Vwo 6 discovered the exact same lines in the opening of Carol Ann Duffy's commemorative poem 'Last Post:'

> In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
> He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

As I have shown in the introduction to this book, because there are no more living witnesses of World War I who can tell us what it was like to fight, suffer and kill in the trenches, my sixth form pupils and I had to rely on Duffy, and her embedded Owen. For these younger pupils on a field trip with their school, the question was, what was Wilfred Owen's 'most anthologized poem,' of World War I, 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' doing in a 21st-century Turkish-Dutch political commemorative exhibition in Amsterdam's classical archaeological museum (Kendall 2013, xxi)?

The speaker of the poem's harsh words seems to linger with my pupils like the smell of gas; like 'vile incurable sores' in their own 'froth-corrupted' minds (Owen 1990a, 117). Feeling as if they are addressed directly by the poet, Owen's closing words sink in:

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.[47]

Framing the quatercentenary in terms of a 'battle of West against East, of Europe against Asia,' shows that poetic works such as *The Iliad* and 'Dulce et Decorum Est' are weapons wielded by political and academic force fields alike. For 'poetry helps cultures remember their pasts,' as James Winn argues (Anderson Winn 2009, 8). What is at stake here, is the way the Turkish-Dutch relationship will be remembered by future generations. The museum's guidebook, placing canonical (war) literature at the heart of remembrance, offers a choice. We teachers can either teach our pupils to follow Owen and recognise that 'tragic and futile loss of the young lives of warriors' is an important aspect of *The Iliad*, or we underscore the chivalric colours of 'the heroic martial code' that Homer set out in his canonical war poem (Klooster 2012).

The education of our youngsters is at stake here, and the way these Dutch pupils interpret the memory of what seems a perpetual battle between East and West. Owen's poem offers a departure from the 'myth' created by generations of teachers since the establishment of schools in the 1850s. These schools 'ethos […] was essentially chivalric, and which curriculum was dominated by Latin' Jon Stallworthy explains (2014, xxvi). Referring to British (public) schools, this tradition had its counterpart in the Netherlands: my school's classics department is an example of what in Dutch are so-called 'Gymnasium' schools. The rules and rituals of Dutch and British classics departments, past and present, rely on texts from the Latin such as *The Iliad*, which have been dominantly read in terms of Homeric chivalry and are now being re-read in terms of 'Owenesque' futility, a new myth of its own. The field trip had foreshowed the importance of my role as a teacher, bringing them to the academic archive, signifying to them the way they were being influenced, guiding pupils through the political battle. It had also shown me the pivotal role literature plays when force fields frame it to influence education. Yet how did a First World War poem get such a central place on the curriculum of teachers, that it would suggest causing an entire shift in (teaching) educational values?

2.1 Inventing Tradition: Education, Literature and the War for Memory

There is a war for memory going on. The full range of the power of canonical war poetry is being applied, in a battle between the forces of politics and science, for my pupils' identity, their adherence to Western civil, political and academic systems, and the formation of their norms and values. Trying to gain a bird's eye view of what felt like a battle for the soul of the next generation, this chapter suggests answers to that struggle. As a budding scholar of war narratives, I noted the salience of using a traditional gateway to the archive very popular with schools as the place to frame a political relationship between two nations in terms of war. Despite political attempts by the Turkish Ministry of Culture to use what is arguably the earliest war poem in Western cultural history, *The Iliad*, as vehicle to cement their relationship with the West in terms of war, Owen's poem was simultaneously being used to create a departure from the myth of chivalry in war.[48] His 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is an attempt to uncover the 'Old Lie' propagated by Horace. Yet by exposing my pupils to this, was I in turn contributing to what Graham Galer (2008, 8) has called the 'loss, anger and futility myth?' I have led my pupils into what is the most accessible storage house of memory, the museum. Once there, we stumbled upon a battle for our collective cultural memory raging within its walls, with our pupils as primary targets. How were we, as their teachers, going to get them through this?

Owen's poem 'Dulce et Decorum Est' had been placed centrally to a commemorative exhibition in the Dutch capital, as a 'prestigious object' displayed in such a way as to 'catch attention and make a lasting impression,' quoting Aleida Assmann (2008, 98). Yet, logic dictates that 'the same museum also houses objects in peripheral spaces such as cellars or attics which are not publicly presented' (ibid.). In order to gain control of the battle above, the framing of canonical literature to influence education, teachers need to break open what is the 'hierarchical and exclusionary nature of the archive' (Erll 2011, 51). My first instinct as a literary historian and teacher-researcher was to try to gain access to the lesser known or even unknown narratives of the archive using another form of cultural storage: its literary anthologies. My World War I poetry course I taught to Vwo 6, peers to the Gymnasium students who travelled with me to the Allard Pierson museum. And for nearly a decade, I had been relying on out-dated war poetry anthologies. A specific Dutch literature method was an example, which I had found still lingering in the dusty cupboards of my school, Dirk Siersema's *Rhyme & Reason* (1988). Though it provided a thorough backbone to form a basic understanding of World

War I poetry, Siersema offered no other poets than the canonical Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), Siegfried Sassoon, and Wilfred Owen.

It goes to show that before my broad access to World War I scholarship, in terms of time and money, teachers such as myself relied heavily on the budget-neutral and easily accessible school archive, however out-dated its source material might be. Thus it can be argued that anthologies, like museums, are responsible for 'actively circulated memory that keeps the past present as the canon' (Assmann 2008, 98). The popular use of First World War poetry anthologies which foreground poems such as 'Dulce et Decorum Est' would explain why Owen's canonical poem came to play such a central role in education. It is my aim in this chapter to establish education and teachers as pivotal to this development.

Yet I also want access to this 'passively stored memory, that preserves the past past as the archive,' because of the lesser-known war texts locked away there (ibid.). Rediscovering and analysing First World War poetry anthologies I hope will allow me to break beyond the much-critiqued canon. My aim is to redesign a new war poetry curriculum, providing temporal anchors from which to answer the force-field's pressing issues in kind. Given Minister Bussemaker's plea to research ways to overcome teachers' anxiety and teach about conflict, my ambition is urgent. Because, at the time of writing, just 37% of secondary school are 'eerstegraads' MA-qualified as both educational theorists and in their subject-field. Thus two-thirds of Dutch secondary school teachers are going without academic access to the archive.[49] Furthermore, because of the relatively closed off nature of recent academic publications and the time-pressed nature of a daily teaching job, MA-qualified teachers often do not have the time or means to gain academic access either. This is why, haven been given time and money to do so, by analysing the anthologisation of First World War poetry since 1914, this chapter and book seek to use my position as a scholar amongst teachers to open up the archive of war literature.

With these first steps as a teacher-researcher I resolved, firstly, to find out what shifts occur in war poetry anthologies, and secondly, to suggest what lessons teachers can draw from these anthologies. Meanwhile, the war for memory continued to rage outside the gates of museum. Owen's cultural dominance was prevalent in society too. 'Guttering, Choking, Drowning' is the title of an article published in *The Economist*. Its author quotes Wilfred Owen's words as if aiming to use their power to haunt his readers 'smothering dreams' regarding a different conflict a century later (Owen 1990a, 117, cited in M.S.

2013). Placed glaringly underneath it was a photograph of rows upon rows of dead children (ibid.). In the aftershock of the 21 August 2013 gas attack in the Syrian region of Ghouta, virtually every single leading English language newspaper and magazine reflected upon these events using the century-old words of a war poet to so. 'Drowning in a yellow sea' quotes the *Boston Review*, concluding that 'it is time that the epoch that began with Ypres should end for good' (Guillemin 2013). *The New York Times* explains that 'Wilfred Owen, the British soldier-poet, wrote [these lines] in his best-known work, "Dulce et Decorum Est," an effort to depict the horrors of chemical warfare,' and *The Wall Street Journal* simply opened their article with the self-explanatory 'Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!' (Erlanger 2013; Roberts 2013). In short, 'Dulce et Decorum Est' was yet again being framed to tell a story of war, further underscoring the relevance of my research in this chapter.

In times of turmoil, we turn to objects of memory for support. 'In spiritual distress and in the struggle for level-headedness,' Michael Diers explains, 'the main feature of artistic objectivations […] borrow[s] from the mnemonic energies of collective recollection' of which 'works of art are the products' (1995, 71). In other words, the gut references to 'Dulce et Decorum Est' in the media show how deeply this war poem is embedded in the collective memory of Western society. Western society is in need of such 'Mnemosynes' as Diers terms them, to draw upon in times of conflict and war in search of guidance (ibid.). Building on the argument of my former chapter, these are fixed points in time. However, these Mnemosynes are constantly being framed to argue a political, academic, perhaps even societal point of view vis-a-vis conflict. A Mnemosyne like 'Dulce et Decorum Est' has been hectored into becoming the ultimate testament against war. Canonical war poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, their work 'often credited with having been "anti-war"' Tim Kendall argues, 'are routinely recruited for propaganda by campaigners opposed to […] conflicts' (Kendall 2013, xxi). *The Economist* even claims that 'Dulce et Decorum Est' has been paramount in shifting the 'aesthetics and values' triggering 'lawful, peaceful, internationalism' (M.S. 2013). How had these canonical war poems and the myths that accompany them evolved in the classroom? Had I, as a teacher, contributed to a myth, by putting Owen's oeuvre on a decade of Dutch Sixth form syllabi?

With no clear instructions given to teachers how to address this problem, this chapter offers a way forward. Canonical war poems such as 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and

The Iliad are Warburgian war narratives, so-called 'pathos formulas.' As I have shown in the previous chapter, these function as 'cultural energy stores,' Johnson (2012, 8) explains, which 'help us to see backward and forward in time.' In doing so, they can be applied to direct our way of looking at the past, present and future. Conscious of the power of both Homer and Owen's message, this is exactly what the forces of science and politics are doing. Moreover, it is precisely these 'Warburgian disciplines' which, Eric Hobsbawm (2000, 4) suggests, are 'key' to studying 'the actual process of creating ritual and symbolic complexes,' and lie at the heart of what he calls 'inventing tradition'. This chapter aims to foreground teachers as those at the steering wheel of 'inventing tradition,' by putting their choice of literature on the curriculum, a process, as Hobsbawm explains, 'of formalization and ritualization, characterized by a reference to the past, if only by repetition'(ibid.). My way forward is to establish how canonical war poetry has been 'formalized' and 'ritualized' in the classroom since its inception, and to what effect. Finding out what shifts have occurred and why, I aim to suggest what lessons teachers may draw from this to benefit teachers' future curricula via interventions and break through their anxieties and limitations.

I hope it has become clear so far that it is difficult to underestimate the importance of the literary canon and the role it plays in education. Its prime functions, as Astrid Erll explains, are threefold: fulfilling 'the creation of collective identities, the legitimization of political power' and 'upholding or undermining of value systems' (2011, 75). It is the responsibility of educational organisations, Erll argues, 'to select a corpus of texts to be remembered from the breadth of available literary works, and to organise these texts and ensure their being handed down' (2011, 75). This chapter is part answer to that call. The scope of this book is wide and this chapter is a very first qualitative, tentative and intuitive step to developing a much wider collection of multimodal literary interventions. Realising the power of pathos formula literature to provide the ideal gateway tool to lessons on citizenship, value driven education with a specific focus on conflict, I aim to use McLoughlin's tropes to arm myself with in what will be the starting point of my research, a literary historical analysis of World War I poetry, its potential in the 21st century classroom and its contribution to the invention of tradition.

Firstly, by examining the history of anthologising war poetry, I aim to show the role of education and the various force fields influencing this process, thereby hoping to uncover how certain myths have evolved. Secondly, because teachers are time-pressed

and do not always have the academic access, and are therefore anxious to act, this chapter will open the archive of war poetry anthologising. The starting point of my research with this chapter will thus focus on the literary historical, outlining a bird's-eye view of one hundred years of anthologising First World War poetry, to the benefit of my teacher-reader seeking understanding of literary canonisation in the classroom and the stakes involved in this invention of tradition. I hope this will empower my teacher-readers to intervene in their own literature curricula, designing their own from a wider, non-canonical corpus which integrates the academic, societal and political pressures that pervade teaching (war) literature in the classroom. This involves the third and last step, including students. I aim to allow pupils to select their own war poetry from these anthologies, let them engage critically with the way literature might 'legitimize political power,' make them reflect upon how this poetry can 'uphold and undermine value systems' and create 'collective identities' (Erll 2011, 75). In short, coach them in their first steps as critical and free-thinking citizens.

2.2 Inventing Tradition (1914-1918): Establishing the Veteran Poets

With the war poets' firm fix in the canon of war poetry, I soon found out in my first surveys of war poetry anthologies that it is virtually impossible to conceive of a literature anthology of 20th or 21st-century verse without a single war poem in it. Yet when W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) edited the 1936 *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, he notoriously decided to exclude the war poets, stating that he had 'distaste for certain poems written in the midst of the great war, they are in all the anthologies.' Yeats argued that 'passive suffering is not a theme for poetry' (1936, xxxiv). In a sense he was visionary, predicting Owen and 'his' war-poets would attain cult-status, something Yeats wished very much to avoid when he famously, perhaps somewhat jealously, remarked 'there is every excuse for him, but none for those who like him' (1964, 117). Ironically, considering that there is not a war poetry critic to be found that has not remarked upon this infamous exclusion, it has led to more attention on an academic level than if Yeats had decided to include Owen and consorts.[50] It has thus had quite the opposite effect, supporting the notion that any publicity, however bad, is good publicity.

In the introduction to this memorable anthology, published only three years prior to the outbreak of the catastrophe that was World War II, Yeats explains that 'if war is

necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering as we do the discomfort of a fever, […] or […] a more painful disease' (1936, xxxv). Mindful of Hynes' claim that war is a 'climate in which we live' (1998, xii), it would seem Yeats is in denial of mankind's chronic illness. At the same time, his selection does not entirely exclude a poetic rendering of the 'world's worst wounds' either (Sassoon 1983, 153). Yeats includes war poems by veterans such as Edmund Blunden (1896-1974), and as many as four poems by 'the best known,' as the Irish poet dubbed Sassoon (Yeats 1936, xxxiv). Yeats's reasoning is complex and contradictory, keeping ajar the door he tries so vehemently to close to poems by veterans such as Blunden and Sassoon, both well on their way to becoming firmly embedded in the canon. Yeats's biggest vexation with veteran poets seems to revolve around the trope of 'autopsy' (McLoughlin 2011, 42). He writes disdainfully that a 'poet could at any moment write a poem by recording the fortuitous scene[.] I am sitting in a chair, there are three dead flies on a corner of the ceiling' (Yeats 1936, xxvii-xxviii). 'Recording' the 'scene,' does not lead to art, nor poetry, we hear Yeats argue, but journalism; in his view it lacks imagination. And it is precisely this 'autopsy' with which the poetry of the best-known war poets was seeped.

As I have shown in the first chapter of this book, the 'combat gnosticism' (Campbell 1999, 203-15) of veteran poets gives these warriors authenticity, and thus credibility with their readers. It is McLoughlin's important trope of 'autopsy' which is at work here and proving a very handy methodical tool, a first-hand rendering of war experience which makes these narratives salient and credible to its readers. It is precisely this war experience which Yeats almost jealously believes does not belong in poetry. His position as 'most respected poet of his day' refusing to write about the war did not pass without critique (Kendall 2013, 21). As Tim Kendall explains, 'whereas the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin against British rule profoundly affected him, the tens of thousands of Irish losses in France and Belgium went unmentioned' (ibid.). Yeats was 49 when the First World War broke out, and thus not eligible to fight in it. The authenticity of voice he lacked in respect to the war theatres of the Western Front and beyond, he does find when he writes closer to heart and home: Ireland. Yeats looked down upon narratives in which 'the chief character is a mirror' (Yeats 1936, xxvii). Yet his well-known poem 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death' does exactly that:

I know that I shall meet my fate

Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before. (Yeats 2014, 182)

Mourning the death of a friend, Yeats's elegy is heartfelt and personal, and this is what gives it its power. The war had touched Yeats, as he places himself in the position of the airman prior to his death, his friend Major Robert Gregory.[51] Yeats writes Gregory's final words in his place, the result a ventriloquist self-elegy. There is an incipient anger to the almost careless way the airman described his death. The speaker's indifference to his death is his indictment against war. 'The years to come seemed waste of breath' thus connects the personal fate of the airman to that of the Irish as a nation, for whom the outcome of this British war will not 'leave them happier' but unhappier than before (Yeats 2014, 182). 'It was easier to look at suffering if you had somebody to blame for it,' he wrote scathingly of Owen and his lot, disapproving as he was of involving politics in poetry (1936, xxxvii). Yet here Yeats is writing about the muted suffering of the Irish into indifference, implicitly blaming British rule, trademarks surely of the war poets he so vilified. Keeping it local (Irish) and personal, the poet writes with authenticity on war. In fact, Yeats is so good at it, that as many as five war poems by him are included in Jon Stallworthy's centenary edition of *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry*. Only Sassoon, Owen and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) have more poems included. Coming fourth with Robert Graves (1895-1985) and Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918), Yeats is firmly established amongst the now canonical war poets he so abhorred. For this reason, his poem and the power of its autopsy proves excellent classroom material for a literary intervention.

Intervention I: Songs of War

Back in the reality of the classroom, my aim is first to design a war poetry curriculum, which integrates the analysis above and thus makes pupils part of the scientific and political discussions surrounding anthologising war poetry, and the canonisation that follows. Second, I wish to do so in such a way, that it does not dictate what pupils should

conclude from it but leaves plenty of room for their own analyses, to make them critical observers of the force fields' play. Yeats's famous exclusion of the war poets makes for an excellent starter for a classroom discussion, asking questions such as: "was Yeats right or wrong, what were his reasons, do you agree with the analysis that Yeats was in search of autopsy, of an authentic voice?" Linking the lines the Irish poet eventually did write as 'late' as 1918 – 'Those that I fight I do not hate / those that I guard I do not love' – with those by Edward Thomas (1878-1917) some three years earlier, will frame the discussion (Yeats 2014, 182). For they reveal a remarkable similarity with Thomas's lines, 'I hate not Germans, nor grow hot / with love of Englishmen, to please newspapers'(2008, 104-5). It goes to show that Yeats might have taken more inspiration from the English war poets than he would have liked to admit.

Yeats's reference to Thomas' poem, 'This is no case of petty right and wrong,' seems, at first impression, a popular choice with pupils. Still at the start of the war poetry course they follow during the course of an entire term in their sixth and final year of secondary school, it invariably provokes carefully framed answers such as 'war is bad, sir,' and 'all nations were to blame.' These are unsurprising examples of the armchair comments made when first involving a class in an open discussion on war poetry. My pupils have no bearings beyond the introductory poets yet, to form a more in-depth opinion. It is the start of the year, and although these are our most seasoned students, they are new to their class and to the narratives about this particular war. Pupils need to feel safe to speak out in a different language, brave enough to discuss controversial claims, such as 'war is exciting,' or to otherwise contradict an ancient poet taught them by their new and still somewhat daunting teacher. My aim is to make them familiar with academic critique and history of the canon of war poetry, to slowly make them adjust to the territory of discussing war, using literature. It is the first step towards a critical citizenship, engaging with war and trauma in the classroom. These were my first steps towards solving teacher's anxiety to act.

At the start of my research, I had not learned to equip myself with war literature as a gateway to recent calamity. By 2015 I had found a way, showing students pictures of the 'flight MH17' disaster and handing out jingoist poetry inciting an attack on Russian soil in vengeance of the Dutch dead. In hindsight, had I intervened by starting my lesson with a picture of the gassed children of Ghouta, which *The Economist* had published so glaringly under the header 'Guttering, Choking, Drowning,' emotions would have been

bound to flare up upon asking pupils whether this justified military action. That summer of 2013 I was, as yet, too anxious to act upon these events. Like my students embarking on their war course, I was at the very start of tackling what turned out to be an 'anxiety to act' I shared with many teachers. In the autumn of that same year, the Dutch Secretary of State for Education's call for action arrived in my post-box. Jet Bussemaker addressed a key problem in education, that teaching about war, trauma and Holocaust at school, teachers are 'embarrassed to act.'[52] This chapter and book is an answer to her request to find solutions to this problem. Searching for ways to break through the line of canonical war poets, of connecting this century-old poetry with my students' 21st-century lives and of crossing the boundaries between poetry and other forms, I ventured further beyond the remit of my English curriculum and upon a truly multimodal task. I asked them to find contemporary songs with (the Great) war as its setting and subject. The results of this intervention varied, and one song suggested by a pupil tied in perfectly with the Yeats/Thomas lesson: 'A Bad Dream,' by the British band Keane (2006):

> 'Why do I have to fly over every town up and down the line?
> I'll die in the clouds above and you that I defend I do not love
> I wake up, it's a bad dream, no one on my side'

Had Keane been dreaming of Yeats's airmen, or of Thomas's lack of love to defend his fellow countrymen perhaps? The similarities between the texts which were separated a century from each other were striking, as I was thrilled to witness my secondary school pupils, inspired by an analysis of canonical poetry by Yeats and Thomas, actively contributing to the war poetry curriculum. Having struck upon a way to innovate my curriculum towards multimodality, the effects were that my pupils were starting to venture into no-man's-land, whilst I exposed them to the bombs and bullets of received academic opinion and the canon, to stimulate them to engage and fire back, a vital step to becoming critical thinkers. My pupils were moving as though in unison with the war poets themselves, from innocence to experience.

Teaching war poetry, Nosheen Kahn claims, has always been with stress upon the 'conventionally assumed progression of First World War poetry from Brooke to Sassoon and on to Owen' (1988, 35). This developmental arch of war poetry is perhaps most commonly assumed to be part and parcel of the English poetry class. However, my

research into war poetry anthologies leads me to conclude that prolific members of the canon such as Sassoon and Owen were not widely read during the war. Owen published only five poems during his lifetime, and Sassoon was seen as 'something of a minor poet during the war years, and his presence is barely registered in wartime anthologies' (Parfitt 1990, 43). Yet both poets have been an integral part of every (war) poetry anthology since 1918, with the exception of Yeats's selection in 1936. Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was the most famous British poet of the war when it raged. He died in 1915, on his way to the Eastern front, in his own words hoping the enemy would 'meet us on the plains of Troy.' Dying in a canonical literary setting helped to propel his status even more, Jean McNicol (2016) argues. 'That he died in the Aegean and not a ditch in Northern France helped; so did his burial on the island of Skyros, where Achilles lived and Theseus was killed.' Writing in a tribute in *The Times*, Winston Churchill further cemented Brooke's unassailable status: 'joyous fearless, versatile, deeply instructed, with classical symmetry of mind and body, he was all that one would wish England's noblest sons to be' (quoted in Caesar 1995, 1 and Vandiver 2010, 203). In short, he was the first of the war poets to be mythologised.

It may be somewhat bewildering, especially for today's schoolchildren, to think of poets as contemporary 'Gods' in society's eyes. Yet Adrian Caesar remarks, 'if in later times, Brooke's poems about the war were subject to an almost unanimous dismissal as the expression of a discredited, imperialist chauvinism, the idea of celebrating sacrificed youth was to have a longer and more powerful tenure' (1995, 1). This intervention whereby poets are compared to rock stars, especially those known to sing songs of war like David Bowie (1947-2016) or PJ Harvey (1969-), will help explain to pupils how their life and death evoke similar mythmaking as Rupert Brooke's did a century ago. As I will show at a later point in this chapter and throughout this book, it is the creation of multimodal curricula which opens up true didactical and pedagogical opportunities. A poet such as Brooke achieved stardom 'in an age when media was almost wholly print-based,' Walter argues. With cinema in its infancy, 'poetry was, for most Edwardian society, a part of everyday life' (2006, xii). Explaining the natural similarities in form and status of (war) poetry compared to song a century later makes sense to my pupils; they feel they understand why these narratives are on their curriculum. By showing what the role of literature was at that point in history, I also aim to show my teacher-reader how the canon of World War I poetry got started and the important role education played in its inception.

In the United States, 'literacy rates [were] climbing,' with 'modern entertainments such as film' attracting more and more people (Van Wienen 2002, 4). Underscoring the benefits of a multimodal and interdisciplinary approach, this book will analyse the effect and use of genres close to pupils' lives: movies and blogs. The movie-stars and bloggers of today are what poets were a century ago. A poet like Rupert Brooke was a household name. In a day and age of growing literacy, poetry was frequently published in newspapers and read out at public services, in church, and school. Two forces were to be held responsible, for 'the belief in the educative powers of classical and English literature was still extremely strong,' Fussell explains, and 'the appeal of popular education and "self-improvement" was at its peak' (2013, 170). Due to the educational reforms Britain and the United States had very high literacy levels, with 'higher percentages of active writers and readers of poetry in the population than at any other time' (Van Wienen 2002, 4). This resulted in the most literate army the world had ever seen. Mass recruitment and conscription blurred the boundaries between soldier and civilian and these civilians-turned-soldiers had never been more literate. Now that the secrets of warfare were no longer the sole territory of the professional soldier, 'for the first time, we have had the clear lights of intellect and interpretation playing upon the battlefield,' Arthur Waugh argued (1919, 44).

The literary historical analysis into the history of anthologising First World war poetry I had undertaken with these first tentative steps to the benefit of my teacher-reader was bearing fruits. For it became clear to me that these literate soldiers of World War I had been widely exposed at school to 'the kinds of poets and poems which emphasised their sense of national identity in the clearest possible terms' (Walter 2006, xi). Importantly, as Walter stresses, this 'profound sense of nationhood' was established at school. In other words, my careful first conclusion is that this shows literature has long had a powerful link to teaching citizenship values, of shaping pupils' mores and morals, before and during the First World War as much as now, in the twenty-first century classroom. I was sure there would be more to discover within the century-old pages of academic poetic canonisation that would benefit a re-evaluation of teaching war poetry today.

The experience of war drove many of these literate and often civilian-soldiers into writing poetry. For when the First World War started in the summer of 1914, 'it was possible for soldiers to be not only literate but vigorously literary' (Fussell 2013, 170). As

this book will show, soldiers continued to turn to narrating their war experiences throughout the century in a literary form ever since, be they poems, diaries, novels, films or even blogs. For nothing but war generates such a wide 'range of powerful feelings,' Jon Stallworthy claims (2014, xxi), and with such a literate soldiery, these feelings generated an extensive narrative output. Just like my pupils, I leapt to think. Civilians though they be, they live in a 'climate of war' all the same, quoting Hynes. Surely my pupils are no less literate than back in 1916, when the poetic outpourings of soldiers had arrived at such great heights that the *Wipers Times*, a satirical periodical first published in Ypres, added the following ironic editorial:

> We regret to announce that an insidious disease is affecting the Division, and the result is a hurricane of poetry. Subalterns have been seen with a notebook in one hand, and bombs in the other absently walking near the wire in deep communication with the muse. […] The Editor would be obliged if a few of the poets would break into prose as a paper cannot live by "poems" alone.
> (Hislop, Brown, and Beaver 2009, 45)

Unprecedented literacy levels ensured the biggest possible reading public for these civilians turned soldier poets. On a more emotional level, there was hardly a home-front Brit to be found who did not have a personal interest in these poetic outpourings. 'The war […] had become a very forcing-ground of poetry […], an almost miraculous renaissance of the poetic spirit' (Waugh 1919, 40). To me as a teacher of their poetry a century later, it strengthened my resolve to involve students, allowing them not only to pick and choose from the wide corpus of war poetry newly opened up to them, but, crucially, to engage with war themselves by writing their own poetic reactions. This resolve shaped the intervention in and outside the classroom later in this chapter.

Much like my students' poetry from their battlefield experience in Ypres or their reflections on the wars of their age would find willing and appreciative ears with their parents, siblings and friends, World War I soldiers' kin simply flocked to their poems. Any word from their soldiering kin was news in a world without internet and TV these poems found such a popular audience at home because they were composed in and wrote about the unknown territory of warfare. Yet amongst the very first war-time anthologies such

as *A Crown of Amaranth* (1915), it was 'impossible to escape the ubiquitous presence of Brooke,' opening as it did with an elegy to the deceased rock-star-poet (Walter 2006, xvi). The anthology delivers in full its promise of poets who 'repeat the duty and inspiration of the earliest tribal bards' and yet with 'loftier sense of the demands, privileges, pains and patriotism' (Erskine Macdonald 1915, 3). Moving even further away from my trusted Siersema anthology with William Angus Knight's (1915) promising title *Pro Patria Et Rege: Poems on War and its Characteristic Results*, the poems within do not deliver its promise, giving no details of battle or its 'characteristic results' at all, often exactly what its (student) readers seek after.

I was bound to stumble upon a valuable addition to my First World War curriculum within these very first World War I poetry anthologies and put it to the test via a classroom intervention. Knight preferred to include poems by the 'earliest tribal bards' such as William Shakespeare (1564-1616) to paint a picture of war to his readers, along with well-known 'passages from our Nineteenth Century poets, British and American' (Knight 1915, vii). It wasn't until the war was more than two years underway that Knight's second 1916 edition included 'poems written by those serving in the forces,' in a bid to live up more fully to the anthology's promising title (Sillars 2007, 33). Elizabeth Vandiver (2010, 3) suggests that 'if we look at anthologies that were actually published during the war, it quickly becomes evident that a great many poets continued to write in unironic terms about duty, glory and honour throughout the war and afterwards.' This is certainly the case for the anthologies of Ford and Knight published in the early years of the war. Egged on by the latter's spirited introductory words to the collection – 'there will assuredly spring up a greater willingness to die for Great Causes; not only to sacrifice much, to renounce ease, pleasure, and comfort of all sorts, but to be done with terrestrial life altogether' – the poems in *Pro Patria Et Rege* reflect their editor's sentiment (Knight 1915, x; italics in original).

Intervention II: Refugee Poetry

One such poem deserves special mention, for not only is it foregrounded by Knight himself, it has proven a valuable addition to my First World War poetry curriculum at school:

Holy Land of England,

Blessed be your soil.
Noble land of England,
Safe from all turmoil!

England! Land of Freedom,
Land of Love and Hope,
Where schemes of coward enemies
Cannot find a scope.
Noble Land of Charity
Whose goodness, love and care
Cheer the homeless refugee,
Bid him banish fear.

England! Land of Honour
Taking up its lance,
Standing 'gainst the horror
For Belgium and for France!
(Content, in Knight 1915, xvii-xviii)

Knight introduces this poem as 'four stanzas by a refugee,' and in absence of a title, this will serve as such (1915, xvii). The poem was written by a refugee from Belgium called Anna Content (dates unknown). Though its imagery, rhyme scheme and metre take a very basic form, the poem's crude, almost crass simplicity is an ideal bridge to 21st-century students beginning their exploration through war poetry's no-man's land.

Ask pupils to replace 'England' in the poem by Holland, and they may imagine poet Anna to be a 21st-century refugee from war torn Syria. Replace 'Belgium' and 'France' with Syria and Iraq, and a gateway to a discussion on the present war(s) in the Middle East is established. It is in such a lesson that pupils' raw nerves regarding the influx of present-day refugees as well as the question of intervening militarily in the Middle East might be uncovered. Moreover, it allows for fitting comparison with the blatant patriotism of the poem by van Amerongen they had previously read, 'MH17,' and their own incipient nationalism and resurgence of heroism in the face of calamity. In this way, this hitherto ignored poem, dormant in the archive of war poetry, is brought to the battle as a weapon

for teachers wishing to tackle their anxiety to act upon embedding the world's conflicts into their lessons.

Adding five soldier poets to the second edition to *Pro Patria Et Rege*, Galloway Kyle follows Knight's lead, continuing the leap into the hitherto unknown territory of a soldier's experience in battle and its 'characteristic results.' *Soldier Poets: Songs of the Fighting Men* was published in September 1916 and its sequel soon followed in 1917. Kyle claims that the poems in his anthology 'have assumed a certain homogeneity,' and that they 'define the aspirations, emotions, impressions, and experiences of men of all ranks and branches of the Army,' and in doing so reveal 'a unity of spirit, of exultant sincerity and unconquerable idealism' (1919, 7). Finally, the unknown territory of the First World War's battle experience was available to the wide reading and school-going public, finding its way into popular culture and education, quenching the thirst for an authentic voice from the battlefield. For as the war progresses, anthologists become aware that 'the public enthusiasm for Soldier Poets had as much to do with authenticity as it did with aesthetics' (Walter 2006, xix). And as McLoughlin (2011) dictates, it is precisely this authenticity, the 'autopsy' of soldiers' poems, which lends them their credibility and engages its readers.

What is more, with the mourners mounting as steadily as the dead, these poems gained even more urgency with its readers. The battle of the Somme, which started on July 1, 1916, resulted in the 'greatest loss of life in British military history' (Keegan 1999, 318). Many of the soldier poems selected by Kyle had since either gone 'missing since July 1' or had 'found a grave in France in July last' (1919, 10). As John Keegan dictates, 'of the 100,000 men who had entered no man's land, 20,000 had not returned' and 40,000 had been wounded (Keegan 1999, 317). Given the unprecedented amount of dead, some of Kyle's soldier poets were bound to be amongst the casualties. Significantly, amongst the readers of this selection of these authentic soldier poems were those bereft of their loved ones. A 'perfectly worthy ambition of bereaved parents' Arthur Waugh points out with some understatement, 'to raise some personal memorial to a dead son [from the] privacy of the author's bureau' to be included in such anthologies (1919, 42). Yet, Waugh hastens to stress that 'it would be the falsest of compliments to pretend they make any real addition to the poetry of War' (ibid.). These poems spoke from the grave, compensating for what they lacked in literary quality with their authenticity. Given their popularity among its readers, I resolved to choose from these war poems amongst others for future curricula.

Most poems in Kyle's selection are written by members of the professional army and first wave of volunteer soldiers, now seasoned veterans. Not, he adds with undisguised disdain, by 'conscript poetasters who have found new stimulant to jaded literary exercises' (1919, 8). Yet the majority of the Fourth Army who went over the top that first day of the Somme and to their deaths in droves were 'citizen volunteers going into action for the first time' and not the conscripts Kyle so vilifies (Keegan 1999, 316). Volunteers drafted from a citizenry which, according to Kyle's predecessor William Knight, were suffering from an 'effete condition' by the 'tens of thousands during the last quarter of a century in Britain' (1915, x; italics in original). Knight openly surmises with some relish, on 'their eradication, by the gigantic hand of war.' Wartime anthologies contained poetry which was 'unironic' in terms of 'duty, glory and honour throughout the war and afterwards' (Vandiver 2010, 3). Given the dubious selection criteria that anthologists such as Kyle and Knight maintained, this does not come as a surprise. Giving pupils a glimpse of this selection process will allow them to reflect critically on the question whether the variety of poetic reaction to the MH17 disaster, a selection of which they have read in class alongside First World War poetry, and its ubiquitous nationalist, vengeful, masculine and mournful tone, will lead to similar anthologising.

Vandiver has a score to settle with what she calls the 'old paradigm,' which smacks of the 'Old Lie,' reiterating Khan's 1988 definition of literary myth making: 'First World War poetry as a steady progression from illusion to disillusion, from vision to reality' (Vandiver 2010, 2; Khan 1988, 35). Following this argument, Kyle and Ford's anthologies represent the 'illusion' and 'vision' phase of anthologising First World War poetry. For though soldier poetry had made an entry into literary consciousness in earnest, theirs was not yet the combatant poetry which, quoting Waugh (1919, 151), was stripped of the 'tinsel' of tradition to reveal the 'stark and clattering skeleton beneath.' Kyle's eyewitness poets had what Kate McLoughlin describes as 'autopsy,' with which they added a much sought after voice to the canon. Touching upon 'the essence of life no deeper than is possible to the soldier's honest determination to go out and do his best,' the literary application of their autopsy was still in its infancy (Waugh 1919, 42).

E.B. Osborn's anthology, with its delightfully long title *The Muse in Arms: A Collection of War Poems, for the Most Part Written in the Field of Action, by Seamen, Soldiers and Flying men Who Are Serving, or Have Served in the Great War*, leaves no doubt as to what kind of poetry can be found within its covers. Building on the success of Galloway

Kyle's selection of soldier poetry, Osborn's anthology is described by Stuart Sillars (2007, 33) as 'the most celebrated collection of the war years.' Sillars argues that this collection of poetry was 'particularly significant as a poetic response to the actualities of fighting,' when it had become clear that the war had become one of 'protracted and bloody attrition' (2007, 33). Osborn himself explains that the poetry in his anthology, which aims to 'show what passes in the British warrior's soul […] presents a picture of the visible imagery of battle as mirrored in his mind' (1918, vii). In short, a collection that promised poetry whose speakers would be holding Yeats's much hated mirror. Now I was starting to face another problem. For how was I to introduce the contents of all these anthologies I had discovered up till now, without playing the biased literary critic myself? For this far, besides the steady influx of soldier poetry, amongst all the anthologies I had found just a single refugee poem. It was an excellent addition to my curriculum and a kick-start to the broader conversation in class as I have shown above. Moving forward, I needed McLoughlin's literary critical help, as well as another intervention in the classroom.

Intervention III: The Battle for Authenticity

Back to the reality of the classroom, I informed my pupils of the history of anthologising First World War poetry, and how these gradually included more and more soldier poetry to satisfy their mourning readers. Yet how, I asked them, as I handed out copied versions of Kyle and Osborn's selections for their perusal, was I as their teacher to determine my possible selection criteria for the curriculum? And so, the intervention I called 'The Battle for Authenticity' started, with my pupils choosing from their hand-outs the poems that appealed most to them. Having counted the votes, 'The Attack' by Sydney Oswald, taken from Kyle and 'The Assault' by Robert Nichols, taken from Osborn, appeal most to them. The question I put them is, is this because in their estimation, these poems have most authenticity, as I read part of both poems to them:

> Ah! Sweet the whistling sound
> Of shells o'erhead; the next silence most profound;
> Then the wild rush, the quick exchange of blows,
> The raging curses and the strange mad lust
> Of slaughter, all we know; and how the breath
> Sobs out in troubling gasps; and with each thrust

The bayonet claims a bloody gift for death.
And in the end what guerdon shall we reap?
To tend the wounded, for the dead to weep?
(Oswald 1919, 70-71)

My pupils compare this piece of verse from Oswald's 'The Attack' with an excerpt from Nichols's 'The Assault.' They pay special attention to the poets' autopsy; the soldiers' wisdom of the 'strange mad lust' to kill, a 'longing every soldier knows' (Nichols 1919, 58-59):

The beating of the guns grows louder.
"Not long, boys, now."
My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder;
Hurricanes grow
As guns redouble their fire.
[…]
Crash. Reverberation. Crash!
Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.
Black smoke drifting. The German line
Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry
Of our men, "Gah! yer swine,
You're for it," die
In a hurricane of shell…
One cry;
"We're comin' soon! look out!"
There is opened hell
Over there. Fragments fly,
Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky:
Dust, smoke, thunder.
[…]
A sudden thrill.
"Fix bayonets."
Gods! we have our fill

Of fear hysteria, exultation, rage –
Rage to kill… (ibid.)

The result of the Battle for Authenticity is that Nichols is the undisputed winner. Both poems are popular, though Nichols' 'rage' is preferred above Oswald's 'strange lust' for exactly the same thing: killing other men. Nichols, they argue, succeeds in drawing them, like moths to the flame, into the mystery of killing. His use of colloquial language is fresh and accessible to my students, unabashed and gripping. The more detail, the more authentic the poem, they argue. 'Even in the extremist horror of warfare, […] there is a mysterious quality that excites and beckons the soul,' Nichols (1943, 63) explains, and my pupils prove they are no exception to this rule. I tell my pupils that poems such as those by Sydney Oswald and Robert Nichols, more than anything else, attempt to bridge what Nichols himself describes as the 'psychological gap between the soldier and his kin' (1943, 60-61). Nichols claims that 'the feelings of the civilian, fed on newspapers, were outraged by the returned soldier' (1943, 61). And yet despite this supposed outrage, anthologies such as *The Muse in Arms,* which included Nichols's poem above, were bestsellers. 'The Battle for Authenticity' intervention shows that pupils are just as attracted to the brutal truths of war as their mourning family and friends would have been at the time, seeking out the authenticity of combat gnostic war poets such as Nichols and the dark secrets they guard as members of what Van Wienen coined the 'cult of the soldier poet' (2002, 7).

From the collections of Osborn and Kyle, opened up to my pupils and a far throw from my Siersema, my students had selected the poetry of veteran poets above all others. Preferred amongst these were battle poems of autopsy, full of the details of war. And so it came to be that of all Kyle and Osborn's selection of poems my pupils decided Nichols's violent and combat gnostic account of war was 'to be remembered from the breadth of available literary works,' (Erll 2011, 75). There is a variety of aspects to their selection which will be of value to my teacher-reader. Firstly, it shows a relatively concrete way to allow pupils to engage with selecting poetry from the hitherto inaccessible archive, by turning it into an active and engaged classroom intervention. Secondly, it underscores that the teacher's role is to make students reflect upon their selection, how this creates or upholds the 'value systems' of which Erll writes, and not to enforce it upon them. And thirdly, the result of their selection shows that pupils are attracted to war as much as they abhor it, which has hitherto been an underestimated aspect to teaching war literature at

secondary school.

I have shown my students to be in good company, for they are not the first to be drawn to combat soldiers' authentic songs. The reading public was becoming more desperate for soldier poetry as the war continued to take its relentless and bloody toll, and anthologists responded accordingly by reserving more and more space to suit popular demand. Amongst them, by necessity given the scale of death, would have been teachers and their pupils. These civilians mourning for their dead fathers, sons, brothers and lovers, wanted to know under what circumstances they were killed. A poem like the winner selected by my pupils in class, 'The Assault,' lifted a first veil off the mystery of war, of battle, of killing and of death. In this age of multimedia, despite the pervasiveness of the camera, there is still a lack of visual media from today's battlefields such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Thirsting for news from the battle, war seeps in through Facebook ('MH17'), Instagram, and other news feeds on pupils' mobile phones in the classroom, traversing the divide between them and war. With more refugees from this battle arriving in their Dutch classrooms, the need to keep lifting the veil of battle is gaining urgency every day. This is something I will touch upon throughout and with detail in chapter five.

By 1919 'most people [were] now agreed in loathing war' writes Bertram Lloyd (1919, 5) in his anthology *The Paths of Glory*. He explains proudly that his 'collection of poems written during the Great War […] contains so little in any way tending to glorify the idea of War in general.' Instead, Lloyd added poetry that was its moral opposite: so-called anti-war poetry. The poem 'The Glory of War' is a case in point. It opens with the question 'What does it matter if men are torn, and a village razed to desolation?' (Constantine 1919, 88). 'A lot' is the reader's answer to the rhetorical question, clearly inspired by Sassoon's equally ironic opener 'Does it matter? – losing your legs?' published two years earlier in the *Cambridge Magazine*. Other poems with less ironic titles like 'To War, the Harlot, and her Souteneurs,' and 'The Marionettes' reveal that as the dust settled over the battlefields of Europe, a poetic time of reckoning had come. In short, by 1919, soldier poetry had started to establish for itself a niche in the canon.

With my first steps as a teacher-researcher I had shown, firstly, how war poetry anthologies have shifted to include veteran poetry. Yet this shift in anthologies' selections was not necessarily because it contained specifically 'anti-' or 'pro-' war poems. It is foremost because the poems in the anthology told a truth about war its readers had not encountered yet and were hungry for. Similar to the war reports on television nowadays,

these poems lifted the veil off the battlefields of World War I and reported, in detail, its intimate secrets. And herein lies my second goal, suggesting what lessons teachers can draw from these anthologies. These first interventions in the classroom show the benefits of opening up the archive to them and letting them engage in selecting from the wider corpus of poetry themselves. Because the way to do so is varied (handing out complete anthology collections or browsing Internet databases at will; see Intervention V), and potentially time-consuming (preselecting from anthologies for classroom perusal; see Intervention IV below), the interventions in this chapter are by no means all defining, but a first suggestion of how this might also be achieved. Teachers, thus at the helm of a reinvention of tradition, are guide and expert all in one, and, using McLoughlin's theory, coach pupils to reflect critically on their selection criteria. By 1919, readers of veteran poetry were in mourning, desperate to get as close as they could to the battles their soldiering loved ones had fought. Three generations later in my classroom, that mysterious hunger to get close-up to battle had not abated an inch.

2.3 Inventing Tradition (1964-1968): Anthologies for Schools

War has always inspired the creation of literature, and the calamity of World War was no exception to this rule, occasioning an unprecedented poetic output. In times of turmoil, civilization turns to objects of memory for guidance, but people do not just draw upon existing objects of memory, they also create art from its ashes. The 21st-century pupils I teach are no strangers to this effect. They are the post-9-11 generation: the toppling towers of New York and the ensuing wars in the Middle East, the multiple terror attacks in European cities and the MH17-attack, all have inspired a wide and lasting range of literature that has been a constant reality in their lives, to say nothing of the art they might have been driven to create themselves. This is why, eventually, in a war narrative course such as I set out to create via this chapter's analysis of anthologising First World War poetry, room should be reserved for pupils to write their own literary response to war, a vital element to teaching war I touch upon throughout this book.

To them, the 'hurricane of poetry,' quoting the *Wipers Times* which in turn reiterates Nichols's 'hurricane of shell,' is similar to the narrative art which has fed their social media, television and radio. Their lives are thus punctuated by 21st-century wars and terror attacks' commemorative events which they have been raised to accept as a

daily part of their lives. The poetry inspired by the attack on flight MH17 shows the huge effect the deaths of 196 Dutch citizens have had on Dutch society and the classes I have taught since. In comparison, the weight of close to nine hundred thousand dead during World War I to the British is unfathomable, leaving small reason to wonder at the perpetual popularity of the narrative output it incited.[53] The Great War brought 'heartbreak on a scale never known,' argues John Keegan (1999, 4), causing a growing interest in anthologies including veterans' (posthumous) poetry. In defiance of the established canon during the war years and shortly after, war poetry increasingly meant soldier poetry, its burgeoning popularity marking the first step in the development towards the 'one size fits all' approach (Brearton 2007, 209). The poetic examples above illustrate the power of autopsy and confirm Brearton's claim that 'war poetry is experiential,' thus underscoring the soldier poets' credentials. Yet by 1928, the ten-year commemoration of World War I, (veteran) war poetry was not 'always *anti*-war poetry' (ibid.; my italics). The so-called 'quasi pacifist language' which, Winter (2013) argues, was effectuated by mass reading canonical war poets such as Sassoon and Owen, did not (yet) dominate Britain.

Instead, Britain's collective language of the '20s was one of mourning as Britain became obsessed by a 'cult of the dead' (Cannadine, 1981). Many soldiers who had died in 'some corner of a foreign field' were buried where they fell, pockmarking the battlefield landscape of Flanders and France to this day (Brooke 2014, 106). Their kin had no funeral or grave to visit and mourn at. This fuelled mourners' appetite for soldiers' poetry and inspired the first wave of battlefield tourists, families in search of their sons', brothers' and fathers' final resting place. In the absence of graves, thousands of war memorials were raised in villages across Britain, inscribed with the names of the fallen. An empty tomb was erected on Whitehall in London as a national monument of mourning, the Cenotaph, as well as in Arlington Cemetery in Washington, symbolically including the many missing in action.

The previous chapter has shown that 'anniversaries,' as Fran Brearton (2014) put it, 'are given a hard sell.' My research as literary historian quickly showed this to be in no way less so 90 years ago, or 50 years ago for that matter, than it is in the present day and age. During the tenth anniversary of World War I in 1928, Armistice Day was established, which in turn inspired a memoir boom, just like the centenary in 2014 inspired a huge cultural and academic output. This hurricane of war prose published around 1928 was

composed largely by war poets, Graves' *Goodbye To All That,* Blunden's *Undertones of War,* and Sassoon's memoirs amongst them. German veteran Erich Maria Remarque's (1898-1970) *Im Westen Nichts Neues* sold no less than two million copies within a year of its publication, appearing in twenty languages (Eksteins 1980, 276). In the United States, Ernest Hemingway's (1899-1961) *A Farewell to Arms* topped the bestseller lists. All these memoirs were published around the ten-year commemoration period of World War I in 1928. More than anything, the British veterans' success as memoirists confirmed their status as the leading war poets amongst the mass of combat poetry to have been published since 1914.[54]

Pressing on in my bid to open the archive of war poetry anthologies to my teacher-reader, I was surprised to find out that during this incredible surge in literary output and societal attention Wilfred Owen was completely absent from every single poetry anthology.[55] It begged the question how and when the poet who has come to define the cultural legacy of the First World War and by proxy, war in general, achieved his seminal cultural status. A first change occurred in 1930, with the publication in the memoir boom's slipstream of *An Anthology of War Poems*, in which introduction none other than war poet Edmund Blunden underscores the ascendancy of the veteran poets. In fact, the foundations of what is critically considered as 'conventionally assumed progression of First World War poetry from Brooke to Sassoon and on to Owen' are paved right here (Khan 1988, 35). For the first time, all the canonical war poets, enshrined for eternity in Westminster Abbey, were now being included in an anthology.[56] Their contribution totals a staggering 33 poems, of which Sassoon and Owen have written a third. Owen's epic 'Dulce et Decorum Est' makes its very first anthology appearance here. Never before had these 'two poets of unshakeable resolution' risen out of the 'mephitic gulf of the bombardment, in prehistoric 1916 and 1917,' received so much prominence in an anthology together (Blunden 1930, 24).

Using his own authority as a veteran war poet, Blunden is pivotal in foregrounding war poetry which 'speaks from disillusionment, not patriotism' (Brearton 2007, 209). It is Blunden who foregrounds his 'disenchanted' colleague Owen, mentored by Sassoon, as the poet who 'set himself to strike at [the war]' with his poetry (Blunden 1930, 22). It shows the important role the war poets played in establishing an audience and a place in the canon for their own poetry of autopsy. Yet it would take until 1964 and the publication of Brian Gardner's *Up the Line to Death*, again introduced by the pervasive war poet

Blunden, at the start of the fifty-year commemoration of World War I for student-readers' interest in their veteran poetry of autopsy to be kindled in the classroom. Given the rise of Nazism eventually spiraling into World War II and the Holocaust, it is perhaps not surprising that interest in poetry of the First World War dwindled: each conflict its own 'Mnemosyne' quoting Diers. But there is another factor at play: the critique from the giants in literary criticism, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) and F.R. Leavis. 'There is every excuse for [Owen], but none for those who like him,' Yeats confides to a friend after having famously excluded the war poet from his anthology (Yeats 1940, 113). F.R. Leavis, defending Yeats' choice, argues that even in their time, poets like Sassoon and Owen 'could hardly have contributed a challenge to the ruling poetic fashions.' Their Georgian poetry, which has a 'pose to it,' T.S. Eliot concludes, 'is morally, poetically and culturally bankrupt' (Howarth 2011, 221). And these influential critics defined literary tastes until well into the late 1960s and 1990s in the Netherlands.

And yet the war poet's poetry survived. It was canonized despite the opposition from the most important members of the literary culture of their day. The reason why, significant to my teacher-reader, is that it has been a bottom-up affair. The canon rose from the mud of Britain's classrooms, put on the curriculum by its educators. As I will show, the anthologies of the '60s played an important role in this process. Much like the memoir-boom of the 1920s, the fifty-year commemoration of World War I (1964-1968) triggered an anthology-boom. Four new anthologies were published in this period, 'two of which were specifically designed to be used in schools' (Claire M. Tylee 1990, 4). This, Tylee stresses, 'was the same amount of anthologies which had appeared over the previous forty years.' Foremost amongst these were Gardner's (1964) *Up the Line to Death* and *Men Who March Away* by Ian Parsons (1965). 'This book is intended as a tribute to those who fought' writes Gardner in the appropriate spirit of a fifty-year commemoration, introducing his collection as 'one written by the men who lived through it' (Gardner 1964, xix). Holding true to his promise, 35% of the poems in his anthology have been written by the veteran war poets of Westminster Abbey, Sassoon and Owen totaling no less than 18 war poems.

What is significant is that for the first time, children at school were reading First World War poetry from an anthology designed for their use. The manner of selection by their anthologists suggests they used the commemorative wave to promote a post-Second World War culture of peace. Perhaps the tensions in Asia and the threat of another war in

Vietnam and the after-effects of the war in Korea strengthened this need. In his anthology, I.M. Parsons (1985, 16) explains he had great reservations about including poems, which, in his words, were exemplary of the mood of 'optimistic exhilaration with which so many writers […] greeted the outbreak of war.' Prime target was Rupert Brooke, whose poetry Parsons accuses of having a 'crippling shallowness of feeling, and to be correspondingly facile in expression' (ibid.). Brian Gardner goes as far as to omit Brooke's most famous poem, 'The Soldier,' altogether. Parsons' goal is to make the verse of poets who expressed 'what men and women were experiencing and feeling, after the holocaust of the Somme' as prominent as possible.[57] What is significant is Parsons' use of the word 'holocaust' to refer to the Battle of the Somme. Perhaps these poems were filling in for the 'quiet and undemonstrative way' (Oostdijk 2011, 30) in which the poets of World War II responded to their war? It was time to take this '60s educational poetry anthology back to the classroom and enable my pupils to engage.

Intervention IV: One War Poem for All War

As I handed out an edited version of Parson's anthology poems, my pupils delved with some fanaticism into the selection I had given them. I had chosen at least one and at most two poems per poet in the anthology. Notwithstanding these are poems about World War I, I asked them which poem represents war in general best, and why? 'Dulce et Decorum Est' coming in a strong second, I was surprised at the poem which got the classroom vote: 'Dead Man's Dump,' by Isaac Rosenberg:

> The wheels lurched over the sprawled dead
> But pained them not, though their bones crunched
> Their shut mouths made no moan.
> […]
> A man's brains splattered on
> A stretcher-bearer's face
> […]
> So we crashed round the bend,
> We heard his weak scream,
> We heard his very last sound,
> As our wheels grazed his dead face.[58]

The classroom anthologies of the '60s were filled to the brim with the authentic voices of soldiers, 'mocking,' in the words of Jahan Ramazani (1994, 4), 'the traditional compensations for the dead.' These soldier poets told it like it was, with a clear voice, written with urgency and with salience, such as the frank and brutal poetry of Rosenberg's 'Dead Man's Dump.' Not all of my pupils like the poem, some argue they selected it because 'his name sounded Jewish,' thus fitting as Second World War poem too. But they are in general agreement that the more horrible the detail the truer the poem must be, 'just like in war movies sir.' The latter somewhat alarming statement fed my ambition to analyse in more detail in chapter four what it is that makes movies so truthful to pupils.

The similarities with some of Owen's lines from 'Dulce et Decorum Est' are striking, as student-readers, with *Men Who March Away* opened on their desks in front of them, are for the first time propelled into the alien world of Rosenberg and Owen's Western Front, pacing 'behind the wagon that we flung him in,' […] while, 'at every jolt, the blood [came] gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs' (Owen 1985, 64). Whereas Owen's wagon transports a dying victim of a gas-attack, Rosenberg's wagon wheels crunch the bones of slaughtered men, on the way to the 'Dead Man's Dump.' Parsons' use of the word 'holocaust' to refer to the Battle of the Somme is significant. The horrific landscape of death and destruction, where surviving meant transporting the dead and dying across earth that 'has waited for [the dead], 'fretting for their decay,' (Rosenberg 1985, 159) one could almost imagine this to be the testimony of a Word War II concentration camp survivor. Could it be that the teenagers of the turbulent '60s rife with anti-war protests, reading these loud and brutal reports of war at school, filled to the brim with grisly detail of death and decay, sought out the loud and harsh poetic voice of their grandfathers' generation in a bid to understand what their parents' war had been like? In other words, trying perhaps to understand the very darkest corners of humanity the Second World War had spawned, such as Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, the silence was pierced with the voice of Jewish trench poet Isaac Rosenberg's and his brutal report from an earlier 'holocaust,' that of World War I.

For in a similar way, my 21st-century pupils equate the war experiences as depicted in First World War verse as universal to all war, recent and ancient. This appropriation of war experience by subsequent generations is what makes 'pathos formula' war poetry such powerful cultural icons. I want my teacher-reader and pupils to

assess their own age and its issues. Back in the 21st century classroom, my pupils are spellbound by these brutal reports of war delivered to them by Owen and Rosenberg. I have shown how they unanimously debunk van Amerongen's 'MH17' as a flaccid piece of nationalism, and in their armchair ease, equate this poem to Brooke's 'The Soldier.' With no examples of actual battle, Brooke's proleptic elegy remaining a promise of death, pupils universally prefer 'Dead Man's Dump' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est' to report to them the newest state in the wars of their time. My pupils reaction to the latter poems corroborates Simon Weatherstone's (1995, 19) observation, that 'while war poetry was a popular poetry and had become influential in schools, its importance was largely determined by its subject-matter and its documentary value rather than its relationship to a wider literary culture.' By and by, as I tried out my literary interventions, it was becoming clearer that the authenticity of the veteran poet was foremost amongst my pupils, gained more than anything else by gruesome and profane details of violence. It will prove eerily similar to their lust to become voyeurs of the Holocaust as I will show in the coming chapter.

The irony is that although Parsons' knowledge of the horrors of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen motivated him to set down a poetry anthology for use in schools, which he deemed had a firmly normative function, as the example above shows, my pupils nowadays are attracted to its content for very different reasons. Filling a poetry anthology which has been, quoting Caesar (1993, 1), 'credited with debunking traditional ideas of patriotism, heroism and glory, and of communicating to later generations the 'reality,' 'horror,' and 'futility' of war,' does not equate it being read by pupils to a similar pacifist effect. The cultural prominence of soldier poetry was established during the 50-year commemorative period in the midst of the revolutionary '60s, during which soldier poetry's 'publication in anthologies was both cause and consequence of this way of perceiving it' as Martin Gray explains (1995, 57). Fifty years later, at the start of the centenary commemorations, Dan Todman argues that 'it is easy to read Owen's poems as evidence of the horror and awfulness of the First World War and this is how they have been used in schools since the late 1960s' (2014, 172). In other words, by teaching Wilfred Owen in class since the '60s, teachers have sought not to 'uphold' but to 'undermine' previous 'value systems' (Erll 2011, 75).

Thus the acquaintance of the schoolchildren of the '60s with the poetry of Owen and his fellow combat poets ended for good the 'dominant public school ethos' and its

'culture of heroism and patriotism,' and replaced it with one explicating the horror and futility of warfare (Santanu Das 2013, 5). Spurred on by the rebellious '60s, rife with civil protest and social revolutions, teachers have drawn from Gardner's and Parsons' anthologies filled to the brim with the authenticity of combat poets Owen and Sassoon. They have added their poetry to the curriculum ever since the '60s, unsettling the ashes of World War and by proxy opening up the gates of Bergen-Belsen. Doing so, the academic force field suggests teachers are thus directly responsible for creating a culture of peace, facilitating a 'quasi-pacifist' language Jay Winter claims has dominated Britain ever since. Of the 111 poems Parsons has chosen for the education of Britain's secondary school children, a staggering 84% were written by established and canonized Westminster Abbey war poets.

Teachers it seems have drawn massively and successfully from these war poetry anthologies for schools of the '60s and ever since, which has ensured the war poets powerful tenure to outweigh even the Leavisite academic veto. Academic and political objections to this process have only recently gained foothold in society, during the 100-commemoration of World War I. As I have indicated in the previous chapter, Dan Todman and Michael Gove both suggest they find specific fault with a certain way of teaching war poetry. Yet how and in what way the war poets were taught remains to them pure speculation. There is no way to measure what students have learned from all these decades of reading this particular war poetry, and neither is it possible to gauge in what way these poems were taught. 'Horrific!' writes a pupil in his or her 1985 edition of *Men Who March Away* I have in my possession, next to the graphic verse of Rosenberg's 'Dead Man's Dump.' Given that it is very probably this pupil's first encounter with literary details of war, the shock is understandable. And yet I cannot help but detect the awe mixed in with the shock, the exclamation mark, the capital 'H,' the huge lettering and prominence it is given at the top of the page. It reminds me of my own 21st-century students' subdued enthusiasm for this poem by Rosenberg, fascinated as they are with what feels to them like a walk into alien and forbidden territory. Whenever pupils shout out their horror at reading the combat poetry of Rosenberg, or Sassoon and Owen, whether it be 1965, 1985 or 2020, it does not mean this is a pacifist lesson learned, as scholars like Todman imply. As I have shown, pupils' attraction to combat poetry stems from shock *and* awe, it might as well inculcate war instead of preventing it. But to prove one or the other is not the point this book.

Putting war literature on the pedagogic and didactic agenda of teachers in Great Britain on such a national scale, logic would have us dictate, is bound to have had an effect. And it is a tantalising conclusion, that teachers are thus responsible for defining a nation's 'value system,' quoting Erll (2011, 75), thus creating our 'collective identities' and legitimizing 'political power.' Yet it is the force-fields that would have teachers impose value systems which they claim the literary canon upholds, whether these be pacifist left-wing or nationalist right-wing. This book suggests teachers like myself should seek to impose neither. Rather, this book will show that my goal as a teacher is to make pupils able to critique the force-fields regardless of their political colour by using the canon. Sassoon and Owen are the cultural cornerstone of that canon, and though this book suggests vital additions and necessary critique, Sassoon and Owen remain in position. It is my role as a teacher to coach my pupils to become vocal citizens, to make them learn to think for themselves by using the canon. To make them aware of the tug of war played with its cultural legacy, by allowing them to make their own decisions, thus foregrounding their individuality within the broader discussion, and positioning themselves within their society's value systems.

2.4 Inventing Tradition (1984-1988): Where are the Women Poets?

In the midst of the 70-year commemorations of World War I, Nosheen Khan published *Women's Poetry of the First World War*. She states her goal in the clearest possible terms: 'This study attempts to retrieve from oblivion the experience of the muted half of society as rendered in verse, and document as far as possible the full range of the impact [that] the First World War made upon women's poetic sensibility' (Khan 1988, 1-2). It may come as a shock to read that as much as three quarters of a century after World War I had ended, Khan still had to conclude that 'war is man's province and one which has no room for woman,' which, Khan goes on, 'may have contributed to literary critics' obliviousness of her war writing' but is no excuse for it (ibid.). Confronted with this critique delved from the academic archive, I wondered the critical inclusion of women's verse had succeeded; and whether their poetry had found a place in the canon and the classroom yet another quarter century later?

My 6th form A-level students have mostly passed the obligatory seventeen-year age limit for the Dutch army, both boys and girls eligible to serve.[59] During the past decade, I

have witnessed a number of my female pupils choose an army career, despite or perhaps because of their exposure to my war poetry classes. Yet women's poetry of World War I did not feature very widely in my school curriculum until my first year as a scholar, when I began to redesign and develop my own, my final move away from Siersema. 'And not a moment too soon!' exclaimed my female colleagues, teachers of English and war poetry alongside myself thankfully, when I presented them with work in progress so far, a poetry curriculum which included female poets.[60] And yet, despite adding Charlotte Mew (1869-1928), May Wedderburn Cannan (1893-1973), Jessie Pope (1868-1941), Margaret Postgate Cole (1993-1980), and Carol Ann Duffy to the curriculum, most of my male and female pupils still went to the war 'with Brooke and came home with Siegfried Sassoon' (Wedderburn Cannan 1976, 113). For a long time when teaching my students, I felt as if I was more feminist than my young female readers; the combat poetry of Sassoon and Owen had always been very popular with girls. My view changed when I asked them to contribute to the classroom anthology themselves, instead of presenting them with a ready packaged course book. This creative agency allowed my pupils to engage actively in the debate concerning canon formation and the role of the classroom.

Intervention V: Adopt a War Poem

Breaking once more with my anxiety, providing them with poetry from the anthologies discussed in this chapter, as well as an abundance of internet sources, I intervened in the classroom. Calling the project 'Adopt a War Poem,' I asked my pupils to engage with a poem from the Great War that touched them most profoundly, to be considered as an addition to the course book. Adding a second intervention in preparation for a battlefield trip later that year, I asked them to write a poem of their own inspired by the poem of choice for the coursebook. I had devised them to present their own poem at a location of their choice in and around Ypres. Confirming my suspicions, despite the addition of female poets to the coursebook, the vast majority of them had become devoted fans of male canonical combat war poet Siegfried Sassoon. Their verse was clearly inspired by his ironic cadences:

> Why would you be scared?
> Going to war is just a simple thing,
> Fighting for your country, all you cared

Lying in the mud from autumn 'till spring.[61]

Brenda and Anthonia's poem and its rhetorical and ironic questioning leaves no doubt to the listener of the debt it owes to Sassoon's poem 'Does it Matter?' Nearly 20% of my class have based their poems on Sassoon, and most of them were girls. Statistically of course, the figures in this book are not compelling, but they do bolster my thematic approach. I can't help but wonder whether watching war movies will procure a similarly female audience. It is something I will focus on in more detail in chapter four, when my classroom intervention leads to watching Vietnam War movies with my pupils. Yet one or two pupils in Ypres gave me a welcome surprise. One of these was Ingeborg, who presented her poem called "Once I'm a Lady" in St. George's Memorial Chapel saying Jessie Pope's 'War Girls,' was an 'inspirational' war poem. 'I feel more closely connected to the world of civilians and women's everyday lives in Pope's poem,' Ingeborg explains her choice, 'and with the perspective of the child, than with the anger of battlefield poems I know nothing about.'[62] Deliberately keeping a simple metre to the innocent and optimistic questioning of the child speaker in the poem, Ingeborg argued she wanted to create a 'light-hearted sonnet to suit her nature,' as a corrective to the war poets' angry male verse:

Say mum, did you always want to deliver the mail
each and every morning without a single fail
or sell newspapers in the cold on the corner
telling tales of all the daddies fighting for our honour
Say mum, why is that lady doing her best
making the windows all shiny and clean
and why´s that lady all covered in sweat
while working the heavy machine
Say mum, doesn´t that lady mind
all the chimney´s grime in her hair
Say mum, why are all the mummies
doing things daddies are supposed to do
and can I once I'm a lady
do all those daddy-things too?[63]

The repetition of 'mum' and 'lady' clearly reiterate Pope's repetition of 'girls.' Ingeborg adds 'say' evoking a childlike question instead of Pope's omniscient narrator's somewhat imperative adverb '*there*' ('s the'), thus pointing out all the working war girls she sees around her in daily life:

> There's the motor girl who drives a heavy van,
> There's the butcher girl who brings your joint of meat,
> There's the girl who cries 'All fares, please!' like a man,
> And the girl who whistles taxis up the street. (Pope 1981, 90)

Ingeborg is impressed by Pope's home-front autopsy, and not in any way offended by her ignorance of fellow poets Rosenberg and Owen's life at the Western Front, full of splattered brains, cancerous lungs and crushed skulls. Feeling a certain awkwardness, Ingeborg apologetically explains that she feels sorry for the boys at the front, but she prefers Pope's poems. Ingeborg tells me she can relate to the realities the female poet describes, of working girls in the war effort, so much similar to her own efforts as a working and studying teenager in Holland, while wars are waged elsewhere.

Ingeborg sticks to her own experience, as close to her heart as she can, thus chooses 'War Girls' as inspiration, for the sake of its authenticity. The poem 'appears to celebrate the long-sought emancipation which women had struggled for and finally attained,' Khan argues (1988, 72). Pope, and her 'war girls,' are 'no longer caged and penned up,' and thus the exuberant tone of the poem reflects what Pope (1981, 90) claims is all around her: freed women doing men's jobs. Though Pope sums up a veritable number of professions, critics such as Gail Braybon (1995, 45) have warned that 'the experiences of women differed dramatically between geographical areas, trades, age groups and classes.' Janis P. Stout insists that whatever the merit of describing women's war work might be, her poem is too full of 'relentless dogtrot versification and formulaic sentiments' (2016, 20). Whether or not Pope's verse *undoes* the emancipatory effect, which Nosheen Khan argues 'War Girls' *celebrates*, I leave it up to my own war girl pupils to decide. Ingeborg, at least, is one to consent to Khan's claim.

Spurred on by the growing number of mourning civilians and their thirst for accounts from what was to them the forbidden, mysterious warzone, wartime anthologies steadily progressed from adding the occasional soldier's poem to their presence being the

norm. As a result, all other poetry was steadily drowned out, civilian poetry and women's poetry foremost amongst the exclusion. When Osborn published his *Muse in Arms* in 1917, he added only a single poem written by a woman, 'Any Soldier's Wife,' by Dorothy Plowman (1887-1967). 'The echo of my soldier's feet' writes Plowman (1918, 261-3), remembering her loved soldier's departure to war, is the 'wraith of all I cherish most.' Compared to when my pupils read Jessie Pope's 'War Girls,' they are now struck by the huge differences in experience these two poems portray: the fear and anxiety for the fighting husband's fate, almost pre-empting mourning, opposed to Pope's ambitious and exultant working girls. Thus, the creative intervention in the classroom has given my pupils opportunity to create their own poetic testimony and in doing so, has made them reflect upon the process of canonization and its long-term cultural effects.

By 1918, many British women were both in mourning and part of the workforce, both roles reflected in their poetry. This poetic 'lack of conformity', argues Stacey Gillis (2007, 105), conflicts with the 'insistence on masculine unanimity of experience during the war,' and is an important reason why the male poets have for so long dominated First World War poetry, an exclusion that is vehemently contested at the centenary commemoration of World War I. As I have shown, anthologists had started to include poetry portraying 'unprecedented and solitary miseries of modern battlefields' to quench a mourning audience's thirst for the realities of their loved ones' fate (Blunden 1930, 19). In the meantime, an atmosphere was created in which women and civilians had 'no right to speak of war, because they knew nothing about it; all they were permitted to do was mourn,' and even when they did just that, their poetry of mourning was largely dismissed from war poetry anthologies (Kendall 2013, xxiii). The soldier poets' concern was to get *their* truths of the realities of their war experience across to the willing wider public. Again, the trope of autopsy is at work here. Simply put, civilians, and women specifically, did not have 'first-hand experience' of battle (McLoughlin 2011, 42). Soldiers' tales were consoling and salient to their readers in mourning; anthologists omitted women's verse accordingly. However authoritative their writing on the war's effect at home might have been, it wasn't what public and pupils were after.

Critics such as Paul Fussell cemented the established tradition of teaching the poems of war poets Sassoon and Owen during the '70s. Fussell (2013, xv) claims that the soldier poetry of World War I has proven 'crucial political, rhetorical, and artistic determinants on subsequent life,' turning into the myth, which now is 'part of the fibre of

our lives.' However, 'this was not 'the only cultural form in which representations of war were framed,' Jay Winter argues (1999, 345). None more than Catherine Reilly underscores Winter's point. She 'succeeded in identifying no fewer than 2,225 British individuals, men and women, servicemen and civilians, who had written verse on the theme of this most terrible war. Of these 2,225 at least 532 were women and at least 417 (men and women) served in the armed forces' (Reilly 1981, xxxiii). Shockingly, it was to take more than sixty years for Reilly's *Scars Upon My Heart* to finally break anthologies' single-minded focus on male soldier poets.

Critics such as Haughton (2007), Gray (1995) and Todman (2005) all agree that this exclusive male orientation started in the '60s, when, 'the reading and teaching of Great War poetry became bound up with the anti-Vietnam protests and […] counter-cultural movement' (Kendall 2010). Yet as I have shown, the anthologies before the '60s were equally dominated by 'combat gnostic' war poetry, which logically excluded women. Furthermore, despite these critical assumptions, it remains speculative to assume how teachers taught during this decade, and more importantly, to what effect. Todman is forced to concede that it is 'difficult to find any comparisons being made between the Vietnam War and previous conflicts at this time.'[64] My conclusion from my analysis above would be that the focus on soldier poetry started during the war, yet the effect of this focus was not felt until the remembrance years 1928 and most notably, 1964-1968, which inspired the memoir boom and ensuing anthologies such as Brereton (1930), and Parsons' and Gardner's anthologies respectively, filled to the brim with Rosenberg's realism, Sassoon's irony and Owen's pity. It was during these commemoration years that the foundation of teaching the tradition of the 'cult of the soldier poet' was established (van Wienen 2002, 7). It is the poetry in these anthologies that has had such a reverberation in the classroom that it have formed the canon.

Until Reilly's 1981 anthology, World War I was an experience which was 'rendered through a small group of male poets' (Gillis 2007, 100). 'We know of the male agony of the trenches from the poetry of soldiers like Sassoon and Owen', writes Judith Kazantzis (1981, xv), 'we know little in poetry of what that agony and its millions of deaths meant to the millions of English women who had to endure them – to learn to survive survival' (ibid.). Theoretically, a teacher who had read *Scars Upon My Heart* would have been able to include a vast array of female poets of the First World War in their lessons. Yet Reilly's anthology was published in different societal circumstances, with no anniversary to kick-

start its publication. Importantly, it lacked the large-scale easy accessibility of the educational anthologies of the '60s, so popular with its teachers and their pupils.

My classroom intervention shows that when given a wider curriculum (one which includes female war poets) or taking it a step further, a curriculum with the freedom to add to as a pupil, was inspiring. Although pupil's popular vote was still with the battle savvy canonical war poetry of Owen and Sassoon, their popularity and their unflinching canonical status necessitate a continued central position in my curriculum it does merit a more inclusive curriculum. In the words of Blunden (2007, 141), my pupils want 'the smoke of the German breakfast fires, yes, and the savour of their coffee, [to] rise in these pages, and be kindly mused upon in our neighbouring saps of retrogression.' The war poets' poetic authority of what it is like, to fight and kill, supersedes their interest in the suffering of the civilians' mourning women.

Despite Reilly's opening up of the archive in 1981, it still took a long time for the influence of *Scars Upon My Heart* to find a lasting place amongst the selections of ensuing anthologists. During the 70-year commemorations at the end of the '80s, the anthologies of Martin Stephens and Hibberd and Onions attempted to add women's war poetry to the invented tradition of teaching the combat gnostic soldier poets, the former including nine female poets and the latter fourteen. And yet in that same period, despite its promising title, *The Lost Voices of World War I,* which according to Hugh Haughton (2007, 438) had a 'broader and deeper coverage than other anthologies,' its editor Tim Cross included *no* female poets. 'Of the post-1945 period,' Parfitt argues, the Penguin anthologies, edited by Jon Silkin, have 'probably been the most influential' (Parfitt 1990, 150).[65] Silkin, however, does not lead by example: not until his latest edition of 1996 does he include any female poetry at all, bashfully admitting that he had needed to expand his 'emotional register to include the tenderness as well as the outrage of grief' (1996, 13-14). Of course, 'tender' war poetry is not exclusively a woman's forte, and neither does a woman's lexicon exclude 'outrage.' As Peter Parker (2013) points out with regard to masculine 'Mad Jack' Sassoon, outraged poet par example, 'tenderness […] was an equally important though often overlooked aspect of his war poetry.'

In the following chapter I will examine in more detail how civilian suffering on an unprecedented scale contributed to opening up a tender register in war narratives, especially those designed for children. 'Were we ever given the chance to erase war by using the poets' apprehensions,' writes Silkin (1996, 18) in the introduction to his

anthology which remained unchanged throughout all the editions, 'we'd be foolish not to take that chance.' He uses 'four stages of consciousness' which he describes as the patriotism of Brooke, the anger of Sassoon, and Owen's compassion, which ultimately merge 'with extreme intelligence,' into the final stage: 'a desire for change' (Silkin 1996, 30-33). It illustrates the debt Silkin owes to Blunden and Brereton's establishment of the so-called Brooke-Sassoon-Owen myth in their early '30s anthology. Furthermore, by focussing on the idea of 'using the war poets' to 'erase' war, Silkin clearly builds on the idea that exposing student readers to the combat poetry of war poets such as Sassoon and Owen might lead to a world devoid of 'holocausts,' whether of the Somme or Auschwitz. This idea is the pedagogic legacy of '60s anthologies so popular in the classrooms of Britain. As I will show in the next chapter, the idea that exposing children to war and its horrors, the flipside of tenderness, as an educational tool to prevent war in the future, is the cornerstone of teaching children's literatures of war.

For teachers, Silkin's anthologies were easily affordable, attainable and applicable. They built on teachers' existing knowledge, and on the popularity of Brian Gardner and Ian Parsons' classroom poetry. In this way, Silkin's failure to widen the canon perpetuated the established classroom myth of the 'outraged' soldier poet as the authority on the experience of the First World War. In 1996, Silkin finally adds a meagre six poems by women to his collection. It would take another decade for George Walter, Silkin's successor, to put this right: Walter included a record-breaking 29 poems by as many as *nineteen* different female poets to the 2004 and 2006 editions of the Penguin anthologies. By then, one would expect the canon to have broadened, for example, by including civilian, and international war poetry. And yet, as late as 2010, Geert Buelens (2010, 1) is forced to conclude that 'anthologists and researchers automatically steer [their selections to] two categories of poets': combat poetry and female poetry. In other words, after almost a century of anthologising First World War poetry, the canon is still limited in scope and width.

Back in the reality of my classroom, and more specifically, the reality of a battlefield school trip in full swing, it was good old Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen who continued to inspire pupil after pupil presenting their poetry in the trenches of Ypres. Despite my protestations, my acute awareness of the avalanche of political and academic critique on teaching a mythical canon, despite making my pupils an active part of the debate, informing them of the power of anthologising war and its application by teachers

like myself in the classroom: the vast majority of my pupils were touched to the core all the same, by Silkin's definition of Sassoon's 'anger,' and Owen's 'compassion,' an insatiable addiction to the smell of Edmund Blunden's frontline 'breakfast fires.' And yet, when my pupil Jacoba presented her poem in the chapel of Talbot House in Poperinge, her presentation moved us all with her poem, inspired by civilian poet Rudyard Kipling. 'As a daughter of a Major in the Dutch army,' Jacoba explained, 'I couldn't help but feel touched to the core by Kipling's "My Boy Jack,"' as she read out her poem to her audience:

> If any question why we died,
> it was because our fathers' lied
> Yet I believe my father would
> Protect me if he could.
> Because when I look down upon
> The bump of misery he has become
> He doesn't lie.
>
> When I see him cry over my name
> Carved in a stone frame
> He doesn't lie.
> […]
> Have you news of my boy Jack?
> Father, you know I won't be back
> […]
> So if any questions why I'm dead,
> It was because my father cared
> […]
> I have news of your boy Jack
> He loves and misses you back
> Dearly.[66]

Jacoba clarifies her goal was to answer the narrator's questions in the poem, like 'Have you news of my boy Jack?' (Kipling 2013, 29). Presenting her poem on location to me and

her class, Jacoba explains that by answering, she sought to set things straight by consoling the narrator. At the same time, it is also a response to Kipling's bitter lines in 'Epitaphs:'

If any question why we died,
Tell them, because our fathers lied. (Kipling 2013, 35)

Jacoba points out: 'if my dad *had* died on his mission to Mali or Lebanon, I would have wanted him to know I was proud of him. It would not be his fault that he died, nor would it have been useless. And I felt for Mr. Kipling's grief, or how I might feel. So I imagined being both 'Jack' and my father, answering from beyond death to Kipling and myself.'[67]

And so, if it was up to my pupils, by now my improvised classroom anthology of war would include poems by Wilfred Owen, and many by Siegfried Sassoon; his 'Does it Matter,' 'Suicide in the Trenches,' and 'Glory of Women' amongst the favourites that school year. However, as I have shown, they would also have chosen civilian poet Rudyard Kipling and female poet Jessie Pope. As it would turn out that autumn my class followed their fatal teacher to the trenches, their choices included 'Afterwards' by Mary Postgate Cole, 'The Unconquered Dead' John McCrae (1872-1918), 'Last Post' by Carol Ann Duffy and the somewhat unexpected 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost (1874-1963), which is reputed to have been written for his friend and war poet Edward Thomas, to help him decide whether to join the war, which eventually he did and fatally so. Thinking out of the box altogether, the song 'The Longest Day' by the band Iron Maiden was another suggestion, establishing a link with the Keane song 'A Bad Dream,' and thus again with Edward Thomas and the unwilling W.B. Yeats, completing the intermodal classroom anthology.

'It is high time;' argues the Flemish poet and novelist Tom Lanoye (1958-), for the inclusion of a more varied set of voices, those of the enemy, those who stayed at home, the 'pacifists, the anarchists, the parents, the lovers and the teachers' (Lanoye 2014, 10). It would seem my pupils were well underway creating such poetic variety themselves. This development is understandable when seen in the light of the increase of English as the 21st-century *lingua franca*. As more and more secondary schools across Europe, and the Netherlands in particular, opt for *Cambridge Exams* as an extra supplement to their national English tests, with the amount of schools teaching A-Level students exclusively in English nearing the 200 mark, Fast Lane English streams gaining ground and university

courses being taught primarily in English, it is no wonder that there is demand for a British First World War poetry curriculum. Buelens and Lanoye rightly argue for inclusion of Dutch (war) poetry, besides French and German. No better place to create a cross-curricular language and literature program like I have developed and organised on the battlefields of Ypres; where these experiments were effectuated and tried out by pupils like Jacoba, Anthonia, Brenda and Ingeborg, non-natives who created their own English language war poem and a lasting memory, presented in a corner of a former international battlefield.

2.5 Centenary Anthologies (2014-2018): on Giants' Shoulders

As the tumultuous year of 2013 was coming to an end, I took a break from the loud warzone that is a secondary school in full swing and walked into a British bookshop in Amsterdam. It is situated just across the river Amstel from the Allard Pierson museum. I was reminded of the field trip the previous winter. As I walked through the doors, rays of sunlight fell welcomingly through the bookshop's high ceilings, lighting up another celebratory banner in the midst of the Christmas decorations. This time, it marked the impending centenary of the First World War and placed prominently underneath it was a selection of war poetry anthologies. There is no escaping war these days, I thought, as I was forcefully reminded of that other significant time in history when 'Western' Europe and 'Eastern' Turkey clashed, resulting in a battle not far from the plains of eternal Troy; 'Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite:' the trenches of Gallipoli (Byron 2006, 98).

Taking a comfortable seat, I opened Tim Kendall's *Poetry of the First World War*, which had arrived fresh from the press that autumn. 'Not since the siege of Troy has a conflict been so closely defined by the poetry it inspired,' read Kendall's (2013, xxvii) introductory words, cementing the strong ties that connect war poems, which ignore time and space, unleashing their power in my 21st-century teacher's hands. Within the space of a year, I had seen the evidence of these interminable ties. The Turkish-Dutch quatercentenary and the escalating conflict in Syria that summer had both occasioned the use of 'pathos formula' poetry in the battle to remember the past and all that this entailed. As Anderson Winn (2009, 2) put it, 'war obliterates the past, poetry feeds upon the past.' I had been surprised to find Wilfred Owen's 'most anthologized poem,' of World War I, 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' the favourite weapon of use. I was, of course, expecting Owen to

make an appearance in the English bookshop, and in the wake of the preparations for the centenary of World War I, I was not about to be disappointed.

As I continued to leaf though Kendall's anthology, I was soon guttering, choking, and drowning in Wilfred Owen's poetry. 'The close identification of war poetry with a British national character persists to the present day,' argues Kendall in the introduction (2013, xv). Bearing in mind Astrid Erll's (2011) definition of one of the prime functions of the canon, fulfilling the 'creation of collective identities,' his observation is justified. As he continues his argument, Kendall explains that more than any other war poet, Owen's canonical poetry stands accused of determining 'the ways in which the War has been remembered and mythologized' (2013, xxvii). This chapter has illustrated the roles that mourning, commemoration and anthologising have had on establishing a classroom curriculum defined by this so-called myth. Yet to my surprise, *Poetry of the First World War*, published just in time for the start of the centenary commemoration of World War I, includes more poems by Wilfred Owen than any other poet. In this way Kendall galvanized the canonical status of Owen for the duration of the centenary, and the myth his poetry inspires.

Adding as many as 37 poems by Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, Kendall's selection, in number, supersedes Parsons', Gardner's, Brereton's and Lloyd's. Only Parsons has selected a relatively higher number of poems by Sassoon and Owen, adding up to 22% of the war poetry he added to *Men Who March Away*. In comparison, this is only marginally more than Kendall's choice fifty years later. No less than 21% of the poems in *Poetry of the First World War* have been written by these canonical giants, compared to Gardner's 19%, and Brereton's 12%. So much for myth busting, I surmised, as I continued to leaf though the opening pages of Kendall's centenary anthology, when I was struck by the following remark: 'familiarity with the best-known poems, via anthologies and school curricula, risks sapping them of their power' (2013, xxviii). As Mark Rawlinson (2007, 117) claimed earlier, it is difficult 'to conceive of an adult first opening Owen, […] because this implies an unlikely innocence.' The academics' point is that through over-exposure *in the classroom*, the originality of Owen's exposé of trench warfare has been lost.

My surprise was now replaced by a flash of irritation: literary critics were accusing teachers like myself of sapping life out of Owen, by repeatedly putting his 'pathos formula' war on my war poetry curriculum. Yet here I was, a teacher unlocking my door to the archive, only to find anthologies such as Kendall's filled to the brim with Wilfred Owen's

poetry. How was I to break with this tradition of teaching war poetry, if the centenary anthologies did not? Looking back, I realise I felt doubly stung. That same year, I had evidenced the way force fields of politics, science and society had fought over remembrance of the past, using canonical war poetry as a weapon. My progressive insight as a scholar had made me newly sensitive to the use of Owen's poetry. The museum visit framing *The Iliad* and 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' newspapers filled with references to Owen's famous poem in reaction to recent wars, the letter I had received from the Dutch Secretary of State for Education, asking me to find a solution for the pervasive anxiousness teachers have when faced addressing calamity in the classroom: war was raging all around me. Yet I felt Kendall was sending me over the precipice to face a variety of battles with the same plan of attack as always.

However, upon closer examination, Kendall did provide some new arsenal, for a teacher leading his pupils into the canonical battle for our collective cultural memory of war, with three claims I wish to foreground here. Firstly, explains the anthologist, to avoid complacent reading fresh introductions to the canonical work are needed, because 'information can help to make the familiar strange once more, and unsettle received opinion' (Kendall 2013, xxviii). He points out that Owen, contrary to received opinion, 'does not subscribe to an anti-war manifesto,' but writes with 'what can be more accurately labelled as anti-pro-war poetry. […] Most soldier-poets – like most soldiers – believed the War to be necessary, but wanted the costs acknowledged and the truths told' (Kendall 2013, xxi). This explains the dichotic nature of Sassoon and Owen's relationship to war, uncovering lies and fighting like angels at the same time. This claim corroborates my experience in the classroom so far: pupils are shocked *and* awed by the poets' 'costs' and 'truths,' but this does not coax them into pacifism because of this exposure. Controlling what pupils think is impossible; sending them over the precipice by making them think is not.

Secondly, Kendall points out that his choice in war poetry for his anthology selection has been made foremost on the basis of poetic quality. Thus, 'preferring to be unkind to minor writers' automatically foregrounds the 'most important poets,' which are, accordingly, given 'the largest allowance of space' (Kendall 2013, xxix). This might explain why in *The New Oxford Book of War Poetry*, published in the summer of 2014, Jon Stallworthy only added a meagre eleven female poets to his selection of war poetry ranging from Biblical battlefield to latter day Iraq, making up less than 5% of the total sum

of poems added. Though Nosheen Khan (1988, 4) corroborates that the quality of female war poetry is 'decidedly uneven, […] marred' as it often is 'by the scars of haste, hysteria and of the melodramatic,' I cannot help but be surprised once more at what seems a very conservative academic choice. Yet what is important is that both Kendall's emphasis on poetic form as most important selection criteria for anthologists and what I shall term the *anti-jingoism* of canonical war poets such as Owen, gently steers the debate on how to teach First World War poetry away from the academic and political, and towards its literary core.

Thirdly, Kendall's inclusion of 'a modest selection of music-hall and trench songs' in an attempt to widen the canon, 'the best of which are more verbally ingenious than all but the strongest war poetry,' confirmed I was on the right track with my own improvisational classroom anthology, breaking beyond the canon by including songs on war (Kendall 2013, xxix). Besides Keane's 'A Bad Dream,' another classroom find was PJ Harvey's 'On Battleship Hill;'

> On Battleship Hill's caved in trenches,
> a hateful feeling still lingers,
> even now, 80 years later.
> Cruel nature.
>
> The land returns to how it has always been.
> The scent of Thyme carried on the wind.
> Jagged mountains, jutting out,
> cracked like teeth in a rotten mouth.
> On Battleship Hill I hear the wind,
> Say 'Cruel nature has won again.' (Harvey 2010)

Impressed by England's recent involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Harvey has written an entire album, *Let England Shake*, filled with songs about war. Her décor is Turkey, and specifically, the First World War battlefield of Gallipoli. Considering the fact that 'like the young Polly, everyone in England is introduced to the War Poets at school,' argues Peter Sierksema (2011) in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, the listener will probably recognise 'fragments' of the familiar 'canonical literature' of 'Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred

Owen and […] Rupert Brooke in her songs'. It is perhaps a small step from the guttural alliteration and assonance of Owen's 'guttering,' 'choking,' and 'drowning' to Harvey's 'jagged,' 'jutting,' 'cracked' and 'rotten' which, to the seasoned reader, conjure up the familiar picture of the harsh, mechanized, and futile war, a supposed 'myth' I set out to counter by adding Harvey's poetic song text to my increasingly multimodal curriculum, instead of enforcing it.

Yet it had been *The Iliad* which my precocious students were reminded of when reading and listening to PJ Harvey's song. These pupils took Latin and Greek and had, some years before the Turkish-Dutch quarter-centenary political commemorations, visited the Allard Pierson Museum as 'Gymnasium' students on a field trip themselves. Now they remembered the gritty realism present in that epic war poem, parts of which they were translating in their Latin class. Due to its linguistic difficulty, my colleagues of the classics department explained, they reserved *The Iliad* for sixth-form students, its bloody plot relentlessly appealing two millennia after its conception:

> But Patroclus threw his spear, and the weapon did not leave his hand for noth*ing*. It struck Sarpedon where the lungs enclosed his dense heart, and he crashed down as an oak crashes down or a poplar or a tower*ing* pine which woodsmen cut in the mountains with their newly sharpened axes to make timbers for a ship. So Sarpedon lay stretched in front of his chariot and horses, gurg*ling* and clutch*ing* at the bloodstained dust. (Homer 2003, 287)

The use of the adjectives 'towering,' 'gurgling' and 'clutching,' and even the noun 'nothing,' added to which the 'blood' and the 'lungs,' and it is a small step for the reader to recognise the same guttural fragments from Wilfred Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' that we recognize in PJ Harvey's song. 'Coughing,' 'haunting,' 'fumbling,' 'fitting,' 'floundring,' 'drowning,' 'guttering,' 'choking,' 'drowning,' 'smothering,' 'writhing,' 'hanging,' 'blood,' 'gargling,' 'lungs' (Owen 1990a, 117). As if Patroclus is killing Sarpedon over and over again like a Freudian trauma repeated, the hypnotic use of the present continuous lending a timeless quality to Owen's poem. Even using Horace's Latin tag 'dulce et decorum,' is a form of the continuous, which translates as 'fitting,' although Owen himself translates it, with some irony, as 'Sweet! And decorous!' (Owen 1967a, 500). Here was the much-

needed bridge between Troy and Ypres and with the 'Ghouta's' of the future I had been seeking, to use the ancient and centenary war poem, pathos formulas wielding their power in the hands of an English literature teacher. These were perfect weapons in the battle against the pervasive anxiousness to address war in the classroom amongst teachers which the Dutch Secretary of State for Education had sent me into in the autumn of 2013.

Homer and Owen are out to get the 'costs acknowledged and the truths told' (Kendall 2013, xxi). The truth and cost of war has always and will always involve blood and guts, details of war which shock as well as thrill their young readers, the 'silly buggers they are to blunder in and scorch their wings with glory' (Sassoon 1984, 89-90). It might well turn out that the drive to acknowledge cost however bloody and truth however grizzly is a vital element connecting war narratives with each other, across time and space. 'All wars have certain elements in common,' McLoughlin explains, and as I will show throughout and in more detail in the last chapter, this results in certain 'similarities in written representations across periods and cultures' (McLoughlin 2011, 12). Such 'similarities' between war narratives across the ages bridge the divide between Turkey's battlefields then and now, it establishes with clarity the gateways towards lessons on war and conflict. Having the literary cultural armour in hand will help battle the anxiousness teachers of English, History, Classics and foreign languages might have had. Some armour might have seemed dated, but as this chapter has shown, and indeed Kendall confirms, the power of pathos formula war poetry like *The Iliad* and 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is interminable.

By intervening in the classroom, putting children's World War II narratives, Vietnam War movies and even a meet and greet with an Iraqi veteran and poet on the curriculum, this book will continue to analyse the similarities between war narratives in a bid to establish gateways to society, politics' and science's most pressing concerns with regards to conflict. The detailed analysis of the history of anthologising World War I poetry has shown that education has left a defining mark on what we regard as the canon and continues to wield the power to do so. 'Songs of War,' 'Refugee Poetry,' 'Authenticity Test,' 'One poem for all war' and 'Adopt a War Poem' are examples of lucid and easily applicable interventions, that can be finetuned and adapted to suit any other literature teacher's curriculum. The main goal is to let pupils think. For 'it remains unclear whether war sweetens the study of poetry or vice versa' (Rawlinson 2007, 116). Owen's 'Dulce et

Decorum Est' could easily be concluded to be an anti-war poem by pupils and teachers because of the horror it describes; somehow a conclusion many pupils initially do draw. Horrors are bad, so war is bad. However, teachers should call pupils out on their fascination about these descriptions and point out the lack of a rejection of war but an emphasis on description, on numbness, on despair even, that they realise there might be more to the poem than just pro- or anti-war sentiment.

Given the dichotic nature of pupils' reactions to these pathos formulas so far, as far as the effect of canon war poetry in the classroom is concerned, anti-war narratives do not exist. Literature teachers may overcome their anxiety and 'select a corpus of texts' to widen the canon, to include women and citizen war poetry and song, avoiding mythmaking in the classroom. Placing pupils centre stage in this process is vital, by holding up Yeats's dreaded 'mirror' and making them reflect on the choices they make, creating room for students to react, which the wide variety of interventions I have outlined allow. In that sense, twisting W.H. Auden's famous lines, poetry most certainly makes something happen.

We have done with Hope and Honour, we are lost
to Love and Truth,
We are dropping down the ladder rung by rung,
And the measure of our torment is the measure of
our youth.
God help us, for we knew the worst too young!
(Kipling 1899, 205)

3. Finding Anne Frank

Discovering the pitfalls and pearls of using *The Diary of a Young Girl* in and out of the classroom.

Early one Sunday morning I embarked on an unusually meditative north-eastward drive compared to my weekday 40-minute race in time for school and my lessons. As I left my home in Amsterdam, I passed the 'Hollandsche Schouwburg.' Built as a theatre in 1892, during the Second World War it was used by the Nazis as a deportation centre for Jews. 'An unimaginable show' the glaring title of the onsite information post read.[68] Hosting no more theatre productions since those dark days, 'the building today is a monument to the memory of those victims.'[69] Taking a left turn I drove through the former Jewish quarter just before the Portuguese Synagogue and into Anne Frank Street, as I continued my familiar route to school. 'An unimaginable show,' words that kept floating through my mind as Amsterdam gradually receded in my rear-view mirror. 'Unimaginable,' I thought, yet this every-day journey through the Dutch capital was pockmarked with memorials to the horror of war all the same. In fact, as I covered much of the same route I had the previous year, I noticed the advertisements opposite the Allard Pierson Museum, announcing the theatre show called *Anne*. Based on *The Diary of a Young Girl* by its teenage author Anne Frank (1929-1945), this theatrical production premiering that summer was unequivocally asking its potential viewers in the street to come and imagine precisely that which the old 'Hollandsche Schouwburg' deemed impossible to imagine: The Holocaust.

For anyone who has been brought up and educated in the Netherlands, Anne Frank is a household name. Her *Diary of A Young Girl* (hereafter *The Diary*) has a seminal canonical status in the Dutch collective cultural memory of World War II. It was, therefore, much less of a surprise to find the Dutch capital strewn with advertisements for a

theatrical remediation of *The Diary* than it had been when I found 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen in the heart of Amsterdam's archaeological museum the year before. It is a war poem which, as I have shown in the previous chapter enjoys a canonical status in Britain, equal to that of *The Diary* in the Netherlands. And yet, this particular Sunday morning, I noticed more signs flanking those advertising *Anne* that summer: *War Horse*, by children's author Michael Morpurgo (1943 –). The most successful play in the National Theatre's history had transferred to Amsterdam: here was another remediation of a children's war story on show in the capital.[70] *War Horse*, marking the centenary of World War I, and *Anne*, marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of (parts of) the Netherlands during World War II, are both imaginings of the 'unimaginable' adding to the memory melee. Samuel Hynes (1998) was right, I surmised, we really were living in a 'culture of war,' with yet another British war narrative invading the Netherlands from overseas, claiming its place alongside the iconic *Diary of A Young Girl* by Anne Frank.

Both theatre productions – *War Horse* and *Anne* – are centrally programmed on the Dutch cultural agenda and are at the heart of commemorating war. 'Taken together, these intersecting commemorations [of World War I and II] litter the calendar,' writes Jay Winter (2001, 58). War narratives like *Anne* and *War Horse* are so-called 'pathos formulas;' symbols that function as a 'cultural energy store,' which release their energy at any given moment and thus speak, transcending time and place (Erll 2011, 19-21). Like the canonical poems of World War I, these war stories have the power to tell and retell, frame and reframe history and so keep an image of the past alive in Dutch cultural memory. This is why, as the previous chapter has shown, the force fields of science, politics and society are eager to place certain works of literature central to commemorating war. It makes (war) literature an ideal gateway to addressing wider social, political and scientific concerns involving current global conflicts in the classroom, and in the case of *War Horse* and *Anne*, outside the classroom, for teachers and their pupils were bound to dominate the audiences of both these war stories staged at the heart of remembering our violent past. I have previously shown that the canonical British World War I poets are 'often credited with having been "anti-war,"' as Tim Kendall argues. Domineering teachers curricula since the '60s, they 'are routinely recruited for propaganda by campaigners opposed to […] conflicts' (Kendall 2013, xxi). Did World War II war story *Anne* and its original prose form *The Diary* perhaps serve a similar purpose, and equal educational preeminence?

With this issue rushing through my mind that Sunday morning I drove northwards towards my school, the OSG West-Friesland. Glancing to my right, I looked into the eyes of Anne Frank amongst the jumble of books I had hastily thrown onto the passenger seat next to me. Her face lit up by the 21st-century sun shining into my car on the cover of the book, smiling expectantly into the lens. I was guilty of having put *The Diary* on the curriculum of a specific set of students this schoolyear. This war narrative written by a teenage girl was all the armour I was taking towards the next chapter in my 21st-century educational battle: seeking ways to engage teenagers with World War II and the Holocaust. I steadily approached the town of Hoorn, as my student's silhouettes appeared on the meeting point off the motorway. All of them around the same age as Anne was on her fatal eastward journey. As I parked my car, they hovered towards me and burst into song and laughter, 'we're going on a road trip, on a ro-ro road trip.' Seventy years later, following Anne Frank on her fatal journey eastwards, my pupils carried a copy of the diary with them in their bags which its author was forced to leave behind. Nothing in the demeanour and spirit of my pupils suggested, however, that this was the start of anything less than a leisurely day out, a holiday even. A surge of anxiety enveloped me as I beheld the cheery, red-cheeked expectancy of the pupils under my care. What was I doing in this unique educational setting, driving an expectant squad of students to one of the darkest corners of the world, former Nazi-concentration camp Bergen-Belsen?

3.1 *The Diary:* Teaching a Canon Pathos Formula of World War II

This book argues that by selecting literature from the canon for their use in the classroom, teachers are responsible for defining a nation's 'value system,' creating our 'collective identities' and legitimizing 'political power' (Erll 2011, 75). As I have shown, teachers are at the steering wheel of 'inventing tradition,' and literature curricula play an important role in this process. Does it matter that the literary imaginings of 'unimaginable' horror, war and the Holocaust now dominant in Dutch society were both aimed at children (*War Horse*) and written by a child (*The Diary*)? The previous chapter has shown that education has left and continues to leave a defining mark on what we regard as the canon. The pedagogic legacy of '60s educational anthologies foregrounding the use of Owen in the classroom caused a shift in teaching educational values, namely, the idea that exposing student readers to the combat poetry of war poets such as Sassoon and Owen might lead

to a world devoid of 'Holocausts,' whether of the Somme or Auschwitz. It is a defining moment, when canonical adult combat poetry was primarily aimed at children. Did *The Diary,* written by a child, gain an equal important place in the curricula of teachers, that it would suggest contributing to a similar shift in (teaching) educational values?

The dominance of the theatre play *Anne* in the Dutch physical and cultural landscape underscores the fact that 'remembering the Holocaust has formed a significant part of a broader pattern of the commemoration of the victims of twentieth-century war,' as Jay Winter argues (2001, 58). Central to this shift is Anne Frank, living in hiding in occupied Amsterdam. This girl's 'diary and death from typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at 15,' Joseph Berger explains, 'have made her perhaps the Holocaust's foremost symbol of slaughtered innocence' worldwide (Berger 2014). Now considered as the 'icon of World War II tales' (Myers 2008, 24), it is hard to imagine a Dutch or indeed any bookshelf without *The Diary* on it. Underscoring her position at the heart of Dutch cultural memory, when the Netherlands cast its votes for greatest Dutchman of all time, Anne Frank ended in third place. She was the only child, the only woman and the only immigrant in the top ten.[71] The group of pupils stepping into the car with me that fine Sunday morning, embarking on the educational outing that will be the main focus of this chapter, had all seen a film or theatre version of the diary. All, at some point in their young lives, visited the 'Anne Frank Huis,' the museum and heritage site in Amsterdam where Anne wrote her diary in hiding from the Nazis. For my pupils, the experience of World War II and the Holocaust was synonymous with Anne Frank and her diary, permeating Dutch cultural memory.

In fact, *The Diary* has become 'the best-known account in Western schools,' Kate Agnew and Geoff Fox (2001, 153) explain, 'of experiences of the [Second World War] on the European mainland.' The previous chapter has shown that it was mostly the authenticity of the 'combat gnosticism' (Campbell, 1999) of the soldier poets of World War I that made their poetry unremittingly popular with pupils. Tradition was invented in the classroom and transcended from the classroom into society, by focusing primarily on the combat verse of soldier poets such as Sassoon and Owen, the idea that only men with experience of war can write with authority about it, and that the only good poems are those critical of war. Moving through the century to the grand scale of World War II, a shift towards a more tender narrative has occurred. For the 'most widely taught text about a victim of the Holocaust' is *The Diary*, a children's narrative written by a teenage girl

called Anne Frank (Abramovitch 2012, 177). It has become the most broadly read and translated book in the history of Dutch literature (Bloemendaal 2010, 416). Her diary is at the heart of Dutch and Western education where it has come to define the experience of the Holocaust.

The first chapters of my book have outlined my ambition to break through the canonical line of war poets, of connecting this century-old poetry with my students' 21st-century lives and of crossing the boundaries between poetry and other forms. Yet the scope of my book is much wider. I have shown that Kate McLoughlin claims each war to have 'its own poesis, its natural way (or ways) of being represented' (2011, 10). To each war belongs its own pathos formula 'Mnemosyne' (Diers 1995), she singles out the 'epic novel' as the staple form of World War II. Whether or not it could be argued that a war diary written by a child belongs to this category is beyond the point of my research. What is important is that my first tentative and qualitative analysis reveals *The Diary* to be a crucial and dominant text in the broad width of available literatures on the Holocaust, especially in education. Once again, the importance of the role the literary canon plays in education cannot be underestimated. For, firmly embedded in education, next to the war poetry of Wilfred Owen, is Anne Frank's war diary. This chapter will strive to outline how this 'pathos formula' war narrative, written by a war gnostic girl amongst 'combat gnostic' men, has moved and might still move beyond its time and form in the classroom.

This is why I have chosen to analyse *The Diary* in detail within an educational setting, and children's war literature in more broader terms. Doing so this chapter and this book seeks to use my position as a scholar amongst teachers to further open the archive of (children's) war literature and establish interventions and links with the adult. Having shown that the creation of multimodal literature curricula opens up true didactical and pedagogical opportunities, this chapter wishes to take this ambition forward. Thus, it came to be that my teacher-reader has been given a first glimpse of my furthest venture beyond the remit of my English curriculum to date, stepping into the car with a squad of pupils and heading for former World War II concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in Germany. For besides establishing the role Anne Frank's canonical war text has played in education, I firmly believe that many opportunities for re-writing the potentiality of literature's power in the classroom lie outside the classroom. Embarking on the battle road beyond the confines of school, I will document my choice to arm my pupils with a war novel written by a teenager. I will analyse what role these tender war narratives by

and for children play within the canon of war literature in education. And I will outline for my teacher-reader what had driven me to intervene in the classroom and create an out-of-class intervention, laying out its design, its pitfalls and its pearls.

3.2 *The Diary* and the Role of Children's Literature in Education

Venturing into the archive of literary scientific research to the benefit of my teacher-reader, foregrounding my role as literary historian next to that of teacher and educational theorist, I soon found out that defining children's literature is not without difficulties. All in all, as Karín Lesnik-Oberstein aptly summarises, critics are agreed that children's literature comprises of a 'category of books the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: children' (Lesnik-Oberstein 2002, 15). However, a defining problem arises when we ask the question, 'is a children's book written by children, or for children?' (ibid.). A question which, I myself, and as it would turn out later my pupils also, had frequently asked regarding *The Diary* and had yet been unable to answer. More problems of categorisation arise when books meant for children are (mostly) read by adults. For books categorised as children's literature, such as the *Harry Potter* series or *Alice in Wonderland*, 'appeal as least as much to adults,' as John Rowe Townsend points out (1980, 196). The reverse, of course, could also be argued of adult books read (mostly) by children. Given the dominance of Owen's poetry in education and its canon-defining popularity amongst its teenage readers, it could be argued that 'Dulce et Decorum Est' is in fact a children's story. This would shed an entirely different light other (war) literature such as Vietnam War movies, and their supposed 'anti-war' politics, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Could it be that they too are a (multimodal) form of children's literature, popular as they are with audiences of a recruiting age, late teenagers and young adults?

Putting *The Diary* on my extra-curricular program, searching for ways to use literature to teach about the Holocaust, quickly foregrounded the fundamental problem of being unable to categorise Anne Frank's diary audience: children or adults. As I will show, my pupils were irritated by my choice, feeling they were not taken seriously as young adult readers by having to (re)read a children's book written by a child. Behind this lies the crucial question that I needed to find answers to: 'what does it mean to write a book "for" children?' (Lesnik-Oberstein 2002, 15). For the role of children's (war)

narratives within the process of shaping cultural memory has gained new urgency. Programming theatre plays such as *Anne* and *War Horse* at the heart of commemorative events, but also at the heart of a world still torn by conflict, is evidence of this. This is why, in the wake of the 9-11 attacks, children's literature scholars have sought 'to challenge the boundaries of children's literature, redefining literary and material culture so that child studies would be repositioned at the heart of cultural experience' (Goodenough and Immel 2008, ix). As I have previously argued, cultural transmission and the creation of tradition takes place in the classroom. What follows is the question of what is taught and what is learned when children's war narratives are embedded in school curricula?

Critics are in fundamental agreement that children's literature is best defined as 'books which are good for children,' particularly 'in terms of emotional and moral values' (Lesnik-Oberstein 2002, 16). Children's stories 'cultivate ethical and cultural values' which, Stephens and McCallum (1998, 15) explain, 'function as a replacement for or surrogate of older forms of socially inscribed transcendent meaning, especially religion.' Children's literature is a 'crucial repository of humanist ideology,' Stephens and McCallum argue, 'embraced' by so-called 'retellers of traditional stories' (ibid.). Because schools are the last bastion of shared cultural experience, it is no surprise that children's stories are woven into its curriculae. These narratives are another example of cultural memory's abstraction into objects, 'maintained and interpreted by trained specialists,' to which this book crucially adds teachers (Erll 2011, 28). They are foremost amongst the so-called 'retellers' and by choosing how and what to tell, teachers are at the helm of defining cultural memory, an argument central to this book. This chapter will examine in what way teachers wield its power in the classroom by putting *The Diary* and it's 'ethical and cultural values' on the curriculum, thus playing a crucial role in shaping the cultural memory of World War II and the Holocaust.

'Memory […] is a site of power,' Kim Wilson (2011, 128) argues, 'and the production and mediation of it a contentious and contested place'. Canonical children's war stories, like their adult counterpart, have the potential to create 'collective identities,' to legitimise 'political power' and to uphold 'value systems' (Erll 2011, 75). This is precisely the reason why the force fields of politics, science and society are so anxious to extend their influence into the everyday classroom. Wielding war narratives, education and its educators have the power to control cultural memory, which as Wilson (2011, 129) argues 'creates a site of power for the dominant voice.' For the commonly held view

in contemporary children's literature scholarship is that (war) writing for children is 'inherently didactic' (Myers 2008, 19). The 'ideological tenor of historical books for children' is a very 'important facet' of the genre (Butler and O'Donovan 2012, 84). 'Tone, the prevailing character or style as of manners or morals' in war literature aimed at young readers 'can effect a change in perception and can therefore fundamentally change the conception of that fixed event, personality or idea' (Wilson 2011, 144). This is precisely the reason why literature and the politics of memory is such an intricately interwoven battlefield.

3.3 *The Diary* Versus the Force Fields

The importance of First and Second World War commemorations, which as events of 'public history' (Wilson 2011, 129) are the agents of cultural memory, is underscored by what later became known as the 'Goveadder' debate. Then British Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, launched what Gill Plain (2017, xviii) described as a 'high-profile attack' on teachers at the start of the centenary World War I commemoration. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Gove (2014) argued that 'the Left' insisted on 'belittling true British heroes' of the Great War, by adding narratives such as *Blackadder* to school curricula. Politicians like Gove thus demonstrate what Wilson (2011, 129) terms the 'self-evident relationship between memory and power,' the extent to which a 'state' wants to 'control a particular understanding of the past.' Teaching language and literature is an integral part of memory culture of which politicians are an important stakeholder. At the start of the centenary celebrations of World War I, with active wars raging throughout the world, the British government stands to benefit from redirecting the prevalent cultural narrative that lays stress on the futility of war towards a narrative that underscores its necessity. There is no better way to do so than to directly address the gatekeepers within the super structure of memory culture that is school, its so-called 'retellers' and 'trained specialists:' teachers.

'Anne Frank is not some Left-wing hobby!' the former Dutch Secretary of State for Education, Dr Jet Bussemaker, exclaimed passionately during an interview, when I confronted her with her overseas colleague Mr Gove's claims.[72] Bussemaker's diametric opposition to Gove illustrates that for politicians, there is much at stake when they seek to influence the formation of cultural memory in education. As Kim Wilson (2011, 8)

explains: political 'discourses on war in historical fiction for children play a part in deciding what history will be remembered and how that history might be critiqued.' As I have shown, Jay Winter (2013) goes so far as to claim that decades of teaching the canonical poetry of Owen and Sassoon was responsible for a language of 'quasi-pacifism' that still endures in Britain today. It is this presumed legacy, an inheritance of the single-minded focus of 'left-wing' literature in British education on war, that the British Secretary of State for Education criticises, and the way this legacy has now trickled down to canonical children's war narratives such as Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*. In an interview by the *Daily Telegraph*, Morpurgo noted that his fee for the film adaptation of his children's war novel:

> was more money than I've ever been paid for anything I've ever written. But that wasn't the temptation. The temptation was the chance for an iconic film about the First World War, perhaps as great as *All Quiet On The Western Front* with its overpowering sense of waste. (Gore-Langton 2010)

Morpurgo is in awe of his literary 'anti-war' predecessor, Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970). His best-selling book inspired an avalanche of war prose by war poets such as Sassoon and Graves.[73] What is typical of children's historical narratives, is that its authors want a 'particularized memory of World War I to exist in the present,' Kim Wilson explains (2011, 130), and in this case one which focuses on war's 'overpowering sense of waste.' To what extent Morpurgo shared this agenda when writing *War Horse* is open to debate, one which could thrive in the classroom. What is important is that this example underscores Agnew and Fox's claim that 'adult literary interest' in war narratives has a 'trickle down effect' on children's war literature (2001, 83). 'In the treatment of the two world wars in recent novels,' they argue, 'young readers are invariably urged to examine the nature of violence and suffering […] and to share the writers' condemnation of war,' of which *War Horse* is a clear example (Agnew and Fox 2001, 53). Both Gove and Bussemaker underscore the centrality of canonical 'pathos formula' war narratives in the curriculum of teachers. Yet where Gove criticises the cultural dominance of so-called left-wing TV productions in British education such as *Blackadder*, and the way its legacy of condemning war has trickled down to canonical (children's) war narratives such as Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*, Bussemaker does the opposite.

As I have previously shown, a few months prior to 'Goveadder' Bussemaker sent a letter to a group of teachers on behalf of the Dutch Government, stating the necessity to fight the rise of anti-Semitism in the Netherlands. Key to this battle, according to the Minister, are those she addressed: teachers.

> Teaching about the Holocaust can be very challenging for teachers in primary and secondary education. It seems that some teachers are afraid to address this subject in class, because they fear negative reactions from (some of) the pupils. Teachers seem to be gripped by a so-called 'lesson-fear.'[74]

The Dutch government is convinced that teachers play a defining role in society when it comes to educating citizens on war, trauma and the Holocaust. Bussemaker foregrounds literature, and specifically, *The Diary*, categorised universally as children's literature, as an ideal gateway tool to address such issues of citizenship. Further reason for me to opt for the canonical 'pathos formula' war narrative *The Diary* in my bid to create versatile in- and out-of-class literature curricula, that offer a chance to create the fixed, value-driven marks the force fields of society, science and politics so desperately seek as gateway to developing pupil-citizenship.

3.4 Beyond *The Diary*: Creating Memory Outside the Classroom

As I continue to combine three roles at all times, McLoughlin as method in hand (literary historian), armed with Biesta to fuel my educational vision (educational theorist), and with the daily practice to intervene in (teacher), I ask my teacher-reader to follow me through this new chapter in my exploratory literary quest. Taking a 'beautiful risk' as Biesta put it, I turned upon a road fraught with anxiety. Veering off widely from my experience and expertise teaching First World War poetry, my ambition had overtaken my fear as I ventured into the relatively unknown realms of a different war, genre and form. How was I going to design an out-of-class intervention that would fulfil the goals I have set out above, let alone one that would take pupils to the unimaginable darkness of a former concentration camp?

This chapter is a testimony to the long journey I made with a group of students into World War II's heart of darkness. Yet it was on an ancient Scottish battlefield pulsating in the eternal mind of Scotland's cultural memory that I formed the basis of the answers to Bussemaker's concerns about teaching war. Part and parcel of the culturally immersive program Fast Lane English that I had designed at my school, was the field trip to Scotland. That year it coincided with 'the run-up to the first outbreak of commemorative activity,' surrounding the centenary of World War I. The centenary of a war in which Scots and English fought side by side coincided with the commemoration of a war in which these two nations were opposite forces, Scotland securing independence after their famous victory at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Cause enough for yet another, this time Scottish skirmish between academics and politicians 'over the relationship between memory, history, and representation' (Plain 2017, xviii). Scottish memory, however, 'was even more complexly freighted,' Plain (ibid.) explains, for not only did 1914 collide with 'the signifying force of 1314 but also with a potentially paradigm shifting Independence Referendum,' set for the autumn of 2014.

It was against this backdrop that my pupils paid a visit to Scotland's 'sites of memory' and 'sites of mourning' (Winter 1995). At the heart of Fast Lane English lies the didactic philosophy that cultural immersion through task-based learning exercises leads to giant leaps in foreign language acquisition. Task-based learning 'adopts meaning-based, communicative tasks as the central unit for defining language learning needs, determining curriculum goals, designing activity in the (language) classroom, and assessing language competencies.'[75] With the target of Scottish cultural memory under constant siege, gaining firm foothold in the violence of multiple commemorative forces was going to prove challenging, and yet at the same time it formed the basis of the Fast Lane task I had set them ahead. Students were split up to work in eight different 'task-teams,' each aided by their own specific arts, history, or language teacher. Their mission was to adopt one or more Scottish narratives, linking these to Scottish heritage sites, and framing and presenting these within a ten-minute cultural travel documentary.

As an example, we took our Dutch pupils to Bannockburn, which played a central role in the Scottish 1314-1914-2014-memory melee. Bannockburn is an example of a 'Lieu des mémoire' as Pierre Nora famously called 'the principal places or sites in which memory [is] rooted,' (Landsberg 2004, 6). Nora's assertion is that it is possible to study the mood of a nation at such sites. A case in point was the initiative to commission a poem

to mark the unveiling of a renewed monument at the site of the Battle of Bannockburn, an event given extra significance due to its timely proximity to the Scottish independence referendum (ibid.). Poet Kathleen Jamie won the competition with her poem 'Here lies our land,' now eternally inscribed in the so-called 'Rotunda monument' at Scotland's ancient battlefield.[76] As if sensing that divine intervention was needed, Jamie's poem, consisting of three run-on lines broken into three stanzas of three lines each, is a linguistic triptych in form, with subtle references to the holy Trinity in content. Discussing as much with my pupils, Jamie's poem is given further depth by her evocation in each stanza of the (divine) clouds and sun, the (mortal) 'transients' and 'small folk,' and finally the (spiritual) 'land' or 'country' itself. '*Come all ye*, the country says' as the poem concludes, '*You win me, who take me most to heart.*'[77] With the tune of John Francis Wade's (1711-1786) carol 'Adeste Fideles'[78] humming in the intertextual background, the spirit of the land thus summons the faithful forces of man's eternal battle over her, and like a fatal Helen, to win her love who loves her most.

The final wink to mankind's most famous battle of all time, Troy, eternalised in the epic war poem *The Iliad*, not only confirms the status of Bannockburn in Scotland's cultural memory, but also portends its undying future. Because 'we are constantly reminded that "we" live in nations "our" identity is constantly being flagged' (Billig 1995, 3). Thus, Bannockburn stands as a 'flag' of Scottish national identity (Plain 2017, xiv). Combined with the potential 'pathos formula' power of war narrative 'Here is our land,' both linguistically and literally the eternal Scottish battle-lands of 1314 (Bannockburn), 1914 (World War I) and 2014 (Independence Referendum) aim to evoke emotion and empathy with its visiting readers, by summoning up memories that are not their own. What in fact appears at this site and the interplay with Kathleen Jamie's poem, is what Alison Landsberg (2004, 2) calls 'prosthetic memory:'

> Prosthetic memory emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theatre or museum. […] The person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape that person's subjectivity and politics.

My pupils' path in Scotland was being peppered with literature, the narrative guns which aimed to move and define Scotland's cultural memory. As my Dutch students filmed both the literal and literary contours of Scotland, their documentary films became a unique blend of Dutch teenage experience mixed with the cultural memory of a foreign nation, attaching itself to them and their film task 'like an artificial limb' (Landsberg 2004, 20). The success of this Fast Lane task merited its honorary selection by the Pan European Task for Language Learning (PETALL) research programme as example of good practice. The task successfully promoted the core goals of the programme: a 'mutual understanding and awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity through ICT-based [tasks] that travel well, securing the quality of the communicative exchange across cultural and geographic divides.'[79]

Sometime later I faced the challenge of designing an out-of-class intervention, or task, with which to tackle teachers' 'lesson-fear' (Bussemaker 2013) when they are faced with teaching about war and the Holocaust. I knew I could rely on the award-winning Scottish task design as its outline, taking my pupils beyond Anne Frank's diary and onto the road she took to her end in Bergen-Belsen. Because it was impossible to weave such an extensive outside intervention or task into an existing curriculum, let alone the in-class preparation that would be involved, I went back and searched through the Scottish Task video products, and selected what I deemed was the best product. And so it came to be that of the various pupil teams that had travelled to Scotland, those calling themselves the 'Semi-Matured' gathered wounds that smacked of such honour, that, together with my colleagues, I selected them for the extra-curricular task-based literature course. It is to this group of pupils that I refer to in this chapter and to the intervention I named 'Finding Anne Frank,' which I will outline accordingly.[80]

War stories have the 'ability…to produce empathy and social responsibility as well as political alliances that transcend race, class and gender' (Landsberg 2004, 21). This sheds light on the motives for the Dutch appropriation and world-wide cultural export of *The Diary* as a symbol of innocence under repression, hope after death, a Christ figure for the increasingly secular Dutch, acting as a 'flag' to Dutch cultural memory. At the same time, despite its universal message, Ilana Abramovitch (2012, 177) warns that 'central to teaching about Anne Frank in the United States is an inherent distance, cultural as well as geographic and, increasingly, temporal.' She claims that 'the challenge of mediating that distance is addressed every time a student is assigned to read the *Diary of a Young Girl*'

(ibid.). Linking Anne Frank's 'personalised story' to the task ahead was not just a step towards solving my lesson fears. Exploring Dutch cultural memory of World War II and the Holocaust and contrasting these to Anglo-American ways of reading *The Diary* would allow me to analyse the pitfalls and opportunities of adding the tender register of a child's war story to my pupils' curriculum, by which we remember the violent past and frame it for the future.

As I have argued, engaging pupils in the academic, political and societal debate and making them centre stage in their own analysis of war narratives is crucial. Selecting a group of seasoned students from this former Scottish battlefield had considerable benefits. Their outstanding application of the ICT based task proved them to be amongst the most excellent English learners at our school. Happy to attend the extra lessons it would need to prepare for their extra-curricular film-task on the cultural memory of World War II and the road to Bergen-Belsen on the go, I ventured to draw upon their experience to help shape the task ahead. The Scots were inventing tradition (Hobsbawm 1983, 1) by their attempt at creating a 'prosthetic memory' upon the literary, political and historical 'flag' of Bannockburn with those who encountered its waving. It had caused some of its desired effect upon my pupils' task-team film-narratives; their appropriation of a narrative version of Scottish cultural memory mixed with their personal memories. Wishing to elicit an even more personal response to what might well prove an even more potent 'flag,' due to its heightened spatial, temporal, familial and personal proximity to my students, I selected a narrative which permeated Dutch memorial culture and with which they had all come into close contact during their primary school days in some way or another: *The Diary*.

Out-of-class Intervention Stopping Point I: Westerbork

Some hours after our meeting upon the Dutch heath on our way on that anxious road my pupils and I drive past a site of memory in the Dutch landscape, a 'temporal anchor' as Andreas Huyssen (1995, 7) so aptly termed these fixed marks in the midst of the memory melee. My eyes glanced across the array of books and old newspaper cuttings my pupils travelling in the car with me had hastily flung aside. 'Teachers find the Holocaust a difficult subject to teach' was the headline of an article in a leading Dutch newspaper that summer (Dirks 2015). 'Many youngsters believe the Dutch National War Memorial Service to be unimportant to their own lives,' writes Dirks (2015), 'and at some schools teaching the

Holocaust is a sensitive issue.' My car is packed with three girls in the back and one boy in front, out of a group of eleven students in total. The girls have lost some of their shrill and happy boisterousness but are still cackling with bewitching energy all the same. 'We're just passing Camp Westerbork to the right of us,' I say, as we neared the German border. 'Anne Frank's final stop in Holland after her arrest.' My pupils shift uncomfortably, Andries moves the sweets he had been munching to the glove compartment, Geesje, Gezina and Clasina unplug their earphones and stop their chatter. Familiar movements to me; they were getting ready for a lesson.

Teachers 'continue to champion [*The Diary*] as a key text for young adults,' Ilana Abramovitch argues, thus inspiring 'legions of new readers' (2012, 177). Yet its pedagogy is a site of contention, and for that reason I decide to involve my pupils in the debate. "Some critics claim," I explain in the car quoting Abramovitch, "that 'teachers and students avoid information about Anne that reveals the painful events after the Annex inhabitants' arrest by the Nazis'" (Abramovitch 2012, 167). "We are now passing Camp Westerbork," I continue, "and the diary you have all read famously ends on August 1, 1944, telling us nothing of Anne's journey eastward via that camp. In the last scene of the Goodrich and Hackett theatre version, Anne's father Otto Frank tells Miep Gies that Anne was happy here. I wonder; do you think she was?"[81]

> It seems strange to say this, that anyone could be happy in a concentration camp. But Anne was happy in the camp in Holland where they first took us. After two years of being shut up in these rooms, she could be out – out in the sunshine and the fresh air that she loved. (Goodrick and Hackett 1995, 141)

"Maybe she was," Clasina whispers hopefully, and Gezina and Geesje nod in assent, but after a rueful look from Andries, they both back down. "That's just bollocks sir," Andries says flippantly, "nobody can be happy in a concentration camp." What my pupils stumbled upon in the ending to this stage version of *The Diary* is a prime example of 'characteristic pattern of muting' which surrounds children's representations of the Holocaust (Goodenough and Immel 2008, 13). Fictions such as these could lead to a 'gross misunderstanding of the nature of Anne's fate' (Abramovitch 2012, 168), and my pupils' initial response to the theatre text underscores the urgency and reality of this danger.

Exploring the unwritten pages of Anne Frank's diary after August 1, 1944, on the road to Bergen-Belsen, was my way of giving a voice to a muted children's story of war. Judging from their first reactions, my students were confused and yet on their way to completing Anne Frank's story, which aimed to prevent them from forming misconstrued ideas about Anne's fatal end.

Here I was, car filled to the brim with 'youngsters', travelling along the traces of World War II, dealing with my teacher's anxiety to address the 'sensitive issue' head-on. Dirks's article underscores society's view of school and its teachers, expecting them to take a stand at the helm of defining memory and tackle this generation's temporal separation to World War II and the Holocaust. With each passing day, pupils' distance to that past increases, as the narratives of war shift from 'communicative memory,' quoting Jan Assmann, into 'cultural memory.' My answer to society's plea is to give my students an iconic children's war story as gateway to understanding the Holocaust. Designing an out-of-class intervention, I aimed to couple this linguistic cultural narrative to its spatial counterpart, the memorial road of Anne Frank's final journey, travelling beyond *The Diary's* ending on August 4, 1944. Westerbork's aim was to 'give the victims a name and a face' by personalizing each of the 102000 victims' and 5000 survivors' history, linking them to the lives, 'neighbourhoods' and 'school[s]' of present-day pupils.[82] No victim of the Holocaust's face and name are so well known as its former inhabitant Anne Frank, I surmised, embedded deeply in Dutch and Western cultural memory, a fact I hoped would engage what Dutch media claimed were my disengaged youngsters.

Their end-product I designed to be a short film-diary ending to *The Diary*, by documenting their own eastward journey and visit to Bergen-Belsen, punctuated in preparation with their own selections from the text. Their Scottish documentary films had become a unique blend of Dutch teenage experience mixed with the cultural memory of a foreign nation, which had attached itself to them and their film task 'like an artificial limb' of what Landsberg (2004, 2) terms 'prosthetic memory.' Similarly, the aim was to use the heightened spatial, temporal, familial and personal proximity my students had to World War II and the memory of Anne Frank, to shine light on its ultimate blind spot: the annihilation of the annexe inhabitants during the Holocaust. People are constantly being 'reminded that [they] live in nations', and likewise the identity of the Dutch 'is constantly being flagged' (Billig 1995, 93). It is a recurrent pattern: the memory culture of the day strongly influences perception of the past and future, on what we teach and are being

taught. Yet no 'flag' was waving in Bergen-Belsen to remind the Dutch of the stark realities of the Holocaust and the untimely death of their most popular female icon. Because the Scots' attempt to create 'prosthetic memory' of an ancient battle for nationhood had had its desired effect, the aim was to plant a new 'flag' of Dutch national and personal memory in the form of the task-team's film-narratives.

3.5 *Magical Moments*: the Creation of an In-Class Literature Intervention.

As I have argued previously, it is vital to establish a war literature curriculum that allows students to engage on their own terms. Discussing, as this chapter does, the enormous potential of literary texts such as *The Diary* to establish gateways with a class of pupils to lessons on exclusion, fear, repression, terror and the Holocaust, I mean my teacher-reader to understand these links should be applied broadly. The 'narrow view of citizenship,' as Neil Hopkins has pointed out, 'one that simply defines the term as the ability to recount and remember key historical, political, religious and cultural aspects of [British] society' should be avoided (Hopkins 2014, 118). In other words, by strongly advocating the inclusion of pupils in the wide variety of 21st century (war) literature curricula I establish in this book, it is important to realise this engagement, though established on an individual basis, is nevertheless a group process.

Moving away from a neo-liberalist view of individual responses, I am with Gert Biesta and Robert Lawy (2006) when they argue for a shift from the 'teaching of citizenship towards the different ways in which young people actually learn democratic citizenship,' something which is ideally acquired at school, in a classroom setting. As the previous chapter has shown, pupil's own poetic response to World War I's literary canon and the 'sites of memory' and 'sites of mourning' (Winter 1995) around Ypres, for example, are mostly composed in duos and are all presented to the entire class. Likewise, this chapter will show that the extra-curricular interventions I will outline here, foregrounding specific extracts from *The Diary* that stand out to individual pupils, are also presented in a group setting. Biesta and Lawry (2006) argue that democratic citizenship 'must also include attention to the ways in which young people learn *not* to be involved with questions about democracy and citizenship.' The long road to Bergen-Belsen will show that although this particular group of pupils has been especially selected for the program I outline in this chapter, by no means does this mean they adhere to it at all times.

In the next chapter of this book, I will go into more detail about how watching war movies might facilitate my teacher-reader to gain control of a group of pupils unwilling to be involved in the educational process full stop, let alone the democratic.

Asking pupils to (re)introduce themselves with the ultimate canonical children's war text during a more mature stage of their teenage years makes them see that narrative anew. Divided as critics are on how to represent conflict and atrocity in literature for children, I was searching for ways to include my pupils in the debate. 'The tension within modern trauma theory,' Margaret Higonnet (2005, 51) explains, is 'between those who believe that true trauma (as in the Holocaust) is unrepresentable, and those who believe that the memory of a traumatic experience can and should be relived and narrated in order to put it to rest.' Lawrence L. Langer (1998, 1) has no qualms stating to which camp he belongs, arguing that a 'major legacy of the event [the Holocaust] is the defeat of the words that try to describe it.' What is often unacceptable for veterans and victims of war, Bessel van der Kolk explains, is that the construction of a narrative about a traumatic event such as war and the Holocaust makes of this event something that can be captured, understood, and closed off. Based on his interviews with Vietnam veterans, an area I will return to in the following chapter, Van der Kolk argues that moving beyond trauma is not an act of forgiving but forgetting. Feelings of survivors' guilt and loyalty to the dead are the prime reason preventing them from telling their story and thus moving on.[83]

This bombardment from the academic force field illustrates the difficulty teachers face when selecting texts about the Holocaust for classroom use, when contemporary scholars reserve such stern judgement for narratives that claim to represent it. Theodor Adorno has cast the greatest shadow on talking and writing about war, dictating that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'.[84] Susan Gubar (2003, 4) explains that Adorno's 'axiomatic' dictum was interpreted in a variety of ways, as an 'admonition (beware of writing poetry), sometimes a directive (poetry ought not to be written), sometimes simply a diagnosis (poetry cannot be written).' In a sense, it has become impossible to write poetry, i.e. *to create art*, after Theodor Adorno. The Holocaust is an '"event at the limits,"' which 'tests our traditional conceptual and representational categories' (Saul Friedländer (1992, 3). In the light of the grand scale failure of both literary and historical representations, it is even more difficult for teachers like myself to find representative texts to use in class. Selecting certain war narratives might be construed as choosing sides. What this chapter and this book aim to show is that choosing the war narratives is not a

teacher's main goal. Rather, it is to facilitate debate with pupils about these texts and the dark subjects in history which they claim to represent.

Bearing in mind that many critics argue there is a 'characteristic pattern of muting' around the subject of the Holocaust in literature aimed specifically at *pupils*, the irony is that children's texts ostensibly fail a step further (Goodenough and Immel, 2008, 13). 'Children's books,' Mike and Nikki Thomson (2012) argue, 'often act as sites into which a culture's ethics, expectations and hopes are poured.' Children's war stories such as *War Horse* and *The Diary* reveal 'what we want children to know and learn but also what we also wish in our honest moments for ourselves' (ibid.). To keep this 'ideological tenor' in historical children's narratives tenable, adults tend to 'pussyfoot around the ur-terrors, […] out of anxiety and out of tenderness', Lore Segal (2008, 94) explains. 'To expose the truth to a child […] feels like an obscenity.' Children's narratives, critics argue, do not tell the full truth about war and the Holocaust, because at the same time, they have to reassure the reader: 'what is distressing is often softened and what is traumatic is made coherent' (Kerzter 2004, 254). The horse 'Joey' in *War Horse*, after suffering terrible hardships at World War I's front, survives against all odds and is reunited with his owner 'Albert.' Despite Morpurgo's self-confessed debt to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, he does not copy the fate of Remarque's main character Paul Bäumer, who dies in the trenches just like all his comrades, some months short of the armistice. Likewise, Anne Frank's diary does not tell the story of her arrest, her deportation to Westerbork, Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Goodrich and Hackett's theatrical version of her diary proves how Otto Frank's final lines soften the distressing truth about Anne: her death in a concentration camp.

And so, I introduce my pupils in the extra-curricular class to Gary Weissman, who argues that stories about the Holocaust often have 'a happy ending, thereby denying its true horror' (2004, 12). Weissman calls this 'sugar-coating the Holocaust' and argues that 'stories with magical moments and happy endings continue to proliferate […] in order to appeal to as broad an audience as possible' (ibid.). The play and movie version of *The Diary* is a point in case, in which Anne Frank's final words are 'in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart,' foregrounded from *The Diary* and not the dark 'there is an urge and a rage in people to destroy, to kill, to murder' written just a few weeks earlier (Frank 2002, 332, 280). Confronting my pupils with Weissman's critique in a bid to activate them in the debate, I put to them the ethical dilemma whether it is possible for a book written by a Holocaust victim to contain 'magical moments.' Lawrence

L. Langer (1998, 1) argues, for instance, that there are no 'positive lessons' to be learned from the Holocaust, something which he calls an 'unshakeable conviction', he writes vehemently, and one we need to drop. Yet on the cover of the 2002 edition of *The Diary*, children's author Jacqueline Wilson unabashedly states the book is 'uplifting and enriching' and therefore deserves a special place on every bookshelf.[85] The next step was to put my pupils centre stage to this polemic dilemma.

Breaking beyond my anxieties and taking the beautiful risk, I ask my students to select their so-called 'magical moments' from reading Anne Frank's diary. Their personal response to both the diary and the critique on its pervasive use in education is vital to establishing a war literature curriculum that allows students to engage on their own terms. For my pupils are opinionated teenagers, like Anne, a couple of months short of her fifteenth birthday, who writes:

> I know what I want, I know who's right and who's wrong, I have my own opinions, ideas and principles, and though it may sound odd coming from a teenager, I feel more of a person than a child – I feel I'm completely independent of others. (Frank 2002, 222)

By reading to them this excerpt, one of my own magic moments from *The Diary*, I hope to show my pupils that they, like Anne, are in the process of developing ideas and principles; they are starting to discern right from wrong, independent of their familial surroundings. Yet unlike Anne, my pupils have not been locked up in a small space in occupied Amsterdam for more than two years, constantly aware and in fear of discovery and the terrible end this would entail, despite Otto Frank's claim his daughter was happy in Westerbork, halfway to Auschwitz. The in-class intervention I made was to set them as a task to pinpoint the magical moments from the book every fortnight, discussing these moments with the group in reaction to Weissman. Following the chronology of *The Diary* in-class, the out-of-class intervention, creating their own film from their fieldtrip to the gates of concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, would provide an ending to the in-class intervention: Anne's story beyond her diary.

'But that's a book for *children*, sir,' Egbert exclaimed, while Hubert just sighed and mumbled 'oh no not a book' quietly to himself. These were the first disheartening reactions I got when, during the extra-curricular class with the pupils of the 'Semi-

Matured,' I outlined the centrality of *The Diary* to the course. I knew that getting pupils to read a literary text as lengthy as a novel was a battle anyhow, which teachers of languages had been steadily losing over the past two decades. Van Steensel, Van der Sande, and Arends stress the depth of the problem at Dutch secondary schools specifically, arguing that an ever-growing number of pupils suffer from low reading motivation, and wrestle with reading problems. Pupils' reading motivation is successfully increased, they argue, by supporting students' autonomy, activating their intrinsic interests and addressing their social motivation, especially when set within clearly established goals (of command) (Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends 2017, 3-13). As it stood, the task format as it had been developed and carried out in Scotland ticked three out of Van Steensel, Van der Sande, and Arends' four boxes. The last one, intrinsic motivation, I hoped this icon of Dutch cultural memory would spark off. Upon the outset, however, it did exactly the opposite.

Though many of the 'Semi-Matured' were not averse to reading books, none were motivated to read this novel they all associated with childhood and their own time at primary school, far removed from the young adults they now considered themselves to be. After all those years of having been drugged with *The Diary*, it seemed these VWO-pupils were suffering from 'empathy fatigue,' a 'numbness' that 'is a form of self-protective disassociation' (Dean 2004, 1). Adding to the prognosis, my pupils might also be suffering from 'Holocaust dissociation,' no longer feeling any 'special commitment to commemorating or "witnessing" this part of the distant past' (Weissman 2004, 7). Questioning their present reluctance to engage with Anne Frank and the Holocaust my pupils protested. They explained they had "watched the film and read the book," they felt they had "done" the Holocaust. And they weren't looking forward to engaging with anything the literary length of a book either, but one meant for children simply seemed to offend them. At the heart of the problem was the fact they expected and dreaded the tone of this children's narrative to be prescriptive, obviously ideological, too full of the milk of human kindness. In the midst of the shady no-man's land between late teenage years and adulthood, my 'semi-mature' team of eleven refused to be nothing more than an empty vessel to be filled in by adults' wishful medicinal morality.

'The most remarkable account of normal human adolescent maturation,' poet John Berryman (2013, 48) argues, *The Diary* has been 'valued for reasons comparatively insignificant.' By the time Berryman wrote his acclaimed essay, in the midst of the

revolutionary '60s' commemorative cycle (25-year commemoration World War II, 50-commemoration World War I), it was the 'sentimental popularity' of Anne Frank that had made her diary into a global hit (ibid.). Building on my previous research, *The Diary* has suffered the same fate as that other 'pathos formula' and canonical cornerstone of war literature, so pervasive in education: the poetry of Wilfred Owen. In other words, Anne Frank's 'normative status' had reduced her prose into a collection of 'convergent phrases and memorable epigrams' (Rawlinson 2007, 114). *The Diary* had turned into education's simplified international moral compass, a sentimental pedagogic medicine for good behaviour, an antidote to Holocaust and war adults had forced upon generations of schoolchildren. No longer wanting to be treated like children, my pupils were refusing to take their medicine.

One of the central problems in the critical evaluation of *The Diary* is that the book is not deemed great literature, something Berryman seeks to correct. Questioning whether 'Anne Frank has had any serious readers,' and finding no 'indication in anything written about her that anyone has taken her with real seriousness,' Berryman (2013, 49) finds himself forced to read Anne Frank as a literary masterpiece. Doing so he challenges future readers to follow in his footsteps, and those who have read her diary previously to 'reread the diary' with 'even more powerful feelings than before but now highly structured' (Berryman 2013, 47-48). Here lies the key to ticking my pupil's last box: getting them intrinsically motivated to re-read *The Diary*, forcing them to view the past it portrays as a foreign country, ready for their exploration. Intervening, I set them the combined task to seeking so-called magical excerpts from this educational icon, yet avoiding Weissman's 'sugar-coat,' but adding Berryman's challenge. My intervention is a variety on what Walter Benjamin (Erll 2011, 22) terms reading 'against the grain,' challenging them to reread and find the literary moments in the war narrative set loose from the sentimental pedagogical side effects of *The Diary*. Thus, my pupils might yet circumvent adulthood and education's prescribed moral coding of *The Diary* in search of their own medicine.

And anyway, besides my bid to tick the last of my pupils' four reading motivation boxes according to Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends, (2017) namely 'intrinsic motivation,' I still had three of them fulfilled at the outset of the task ahead: student autonomy, clear goals and social motivation. I needed their Scottish task expertise and experience, and they were looking forward to the creative self-determination this would

give them as a group. The task, though adapted to a different war and a different warzone, was clear to them. The goals of command for this team of eleven, three boys and eight girls selected from the Scottish battlefields earlier that year, was to make another ten-minute film venturing beyond the narrative boundaries of *The Diary*. In preparation, each fortnight would be spent reporting to me about their selection of so-called 'magical moments,' with which Weissman's claim could be corroborated or countered. Critical engagement with the academic debate would serve as an extra motivational trigger to this group. Gary Weissman (2004, 12) argues that 'the marketplace shapes how the Holocaust gets rendered for public consumption' far more than literary criticism. Since my pupils are that 'marketplace,' their autonomous selections would be all the more salient.

In-Class Intervention: Selecting *The Diary's* Magic Moments

I hoped my pupils in the extra-curricular class would break beyond the sentimental epigrammatic nature of Anne's narrative legacy, as it was embedded in their collective memories, so they could discover the reasons why a German born girl of German parents who died in Germany had been 'flagged' as a Dutch Jeanne d'Arc, becoming a moral cornerstone in Dutch education. Now eager to engage with the 'adult' societal, political and academic discussion, I promised to strew my pupils road to the East with selections of texts taken from the variety of force fields' polemic debates. For reasons of practicality and scope, broadening the narrative width of our journey was necessarily limited. Yet tracing the footsteps of this teenage civilian diarist eastwards we were bound to encounter those of journalists and soldiers (poets) who travelled in the same direction in 1945 as my pupils were doing some 70 years later. The group of eleven pupils looked forward to encountering other stories than the iconic voice they had been brought up with, especially from a road that had not been taken by any before in their team. They expressed sheer joy during that first extra-curricular meeting at hearing the exact November date of their departure, and nothing in their attitude and eager faces suggested their travels would take them to a place that had witnessed ultimate horror, and the death of Anne Frank.

Their anticipation of their field trip was palpable during our classes together and would remain intact right up to the morning of departure some months later, as they boisterously sang their 'ro-ro-road trip, ro-ro road trip' song.[86] This was partly due to the deep friendships that permeated between the members of this group (social motivation),

through their shared Scottish experiences (student autonomy), and also in anticipation of the experience to come (clear goals). They behaved as if they were part of an elite group, selected for a special mission, uncovering a secret none of their peers knew. It was true, I *was* leading them into an exclusive realm no other pupil at our school had access to, a journey that might give them 'a secret knowledge which only an initiated elite knows' (Campbell 1999, 204). Back in the classroom, they read to each other one of their first magical moments.

Magic Moment I

> Father, Mother and Margot still can't get used to the chiming of the Westertoren clock, which tells us the time every quarter of an hour. Not me, I liked it from the start; it sounds so reassuring, especially at night. You no doubt want to hear what I think of being in hiding. Well, all I can say is that I don't really know yet. I don't think I'll ever feel at home in this house, but that doesn't mean I hate it. It's more like being on holiday in some strange pension. Kind of an odd way to look at life in hiding, but that's how things are. The Annexe is an ideal place to hide in. It may be damp and lopsided, but there's probably not a more comfortable hiding place in all of Amsterdam. No, in all of Holland. (Frank 2002, 18)

This diary entry made on July 11, 1942 was written only three days after having been forced into hiding, and it suggests that the harsher realities of Anne's imprisonment in the so-called 'Secret-Annexe' located at the Prinsengracht 263 in Amsterdam were only just sinking in. Thus 'Anne Frank, facing mortal peril in occupied Holland, struggles to narrate her situation as an adventure', argues Katie Trumpener (2016, 505), 'although Frank's diary reveals family life reshaped by duress:' Anne's father Otto had been preparing the move for at least a year, and had slowly started to break the news of going into hiding to Anne (Frank 2002, 26).

Moreover, anti-Jewish restrictions had gradually become more tangible in the Frank family and Anne's daily life, closing the net more and more tightly around all Jews living in Amsterdam. 'Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees,' writes Anne on 20 June 1942, listing more than half a page of shocking racial laws which meant, 'you couldn't do this and you couldn't do that but life went on' (p. 8).

When the dreaded call-up notice finally arrives on the Frank family doormat, summoning Margot Frank to forced labour by the SS, then thirteen-year-old Anne had no qualms imagining her worst fears and writing them down: 'I was stunned. A call-up: everybody knows what that means. Visions of concentration camps and lonely cells raced through my head' (p. 19). Yet despite these realities and the very real fears Anne Frank faced in occupied Amsterdam, her first diary entries are lightly laced with some of the elements of thrill and adventure which Anne associates with going on a holiday. Why then should I feel anxious for my young pupils adventurousness during the classes in preparation of departure to Bergen-Belsen on a sunny Sunday morning in 2015, or their failure to grasp the full weight of their journey, when even teenage Anne Frank, living under the harsh conditions of the Nazis restrictive laws, could not be prepared to imagine the stark truths of living in hiding?

'Representations of war are inherently anxiogenic,' I read out to my pupils. It 'resists depiction, and does so in multifarious ways' – turning to McLoughlin (2011, 6-7) for literary theoretical support in the classroom. In this sense, I explained, Anne Frank's failure to grasp the dark reality of her incarceration in the 'Secret-Annexe' was symptomatic of a broader failure of literature to capture the reality of war. Or did Anne Frank 'depict a surrender in the face of representing war,' because, as a child narrator, she was essentially shielded from the darkest truths of her situation? (McLoughlin 2011, 5). Perhaps the simple truth was that no Jew living in hiding could guess what horrors were awaiting them in the Nazi death camps of Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz. Adrienne Kertzer (2008, 207) argues that children's fiction 'continues to be dominated by a variety of narrative strategies intended to soften the depiction of trauma, and thereby negate the likelihood of secondary traumatization. The protagonist in most children's war fiction is rarely traumatized, and if she is, she very quickly recovers.' Thus, I explain to my pupils, the darkest truths of war are veiled to shield their tender hearts against trauma, a comment which visibly insults them: they do not feel taken seriously.

The main protagonist in *The Diary*, Anne herself, does not 'quickly recover' at all, and neither do any of the other occupants of the annex, save her father, Otto Frank. They all die, but Kertzer stresses an important point that is relevant for Anne's story; it does not go beyond August 1, 1944. Therefore, out of necessity of leaving the diary behind, it does not tell of her tragic end eight months later in Bergen-Belsen. As I will continue to show below, my pupils' selection of magical moments from Anne Frank's story until that

fateful date alone show that she does certainly write about war, its violence and its fears. Yet in a sense, Anne Frank's diary is what McLoughlin (2011, 152) terms a 'diversion,' in that it does not relate her terrible together with more than six million Jews during the Holocaust. It is not so much a form of 'not-writing' about war, which my pupils' selection of magic moments alone will show she does, as a 'not-writing' about the terrible end: Anne's capture and murder in Bergen-Belsen. All the more reason, I surmised, to take my pupil-readers on the same eastward road to try to grasp reality behind the abrupt ending of Anne's story.

As narrator of the story, she is conscious of her role as writer, critic and editor of her work, all in one.

Magic Moment II

> To become a journalist, because that's what I want! *I know* I can write. A few of my stories are good, my descriptions of the Secret Annexe are humorous, much of my diary is vivid and alive. […] I'm my best and harshest critic. I know what's good and what isn't. (Frank 2002, 250)

'Anne Frank sees her diary as work' (Brenner 2010, 74), and this diary entry, chosen as a magical moment by the task team, is a point in case. To what extent Otto Frank, as sole survivor of the annexe eight and father of Anne, intentionally shielded the darker truths of war from her story is a subject of continuous academic discussion and beyond my pupils' range. I want my students to understand that like the Goodrich & Hackett theatre version, Anne Frank's diary has been subjected to a narrativisation process. Thus, Anne's published diary deviates from her original historical eyewitness account into the realm of the literary, though as such still firmly rooted as a 'fixed point' in cultural memory (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 127). The tug of war over the 'cultural formation' of memory (ibid.) via war narratives such as *The Diary*, between those who edit, read, teach, seek to influence and of course, write the diary, was foregrounded by my pupils in their selection of magical moments.

Magic Moment III

> Dearest Kitty, Mr Bolkestein, the Cabinet Minister, speaking on the Dutch broadcast from London, said that after the war a collection would be made

> of diaries and letters dealing with the war. Of course, everyone pounced on my diary. Just imagine how interesting it would be if I were to publish a novel about the Secret Annexe. The title alone would make people think it was a detective story. Seriously, though, ten years after the war people would find it very amusing to read how we lived, what we ate and what we talked about as Jews in hiding. Although I tell you a great deal about our lives, you still know very little about us. (Frank 1993, 191-2)

It is at this moment that Anne Frank becomes aware of the public potential of her until then private diary and starts to edit it accordingly. Politicians then and now fully realise the enormous potential (children's) narratives of war have on a nation's collective cultural memory; Bolkestein, Gove and Bussemaker are no exception. It goes to show once again that literature and the politics of memory are intricately interwoven with each other. The appropriation of this children's narrative by the Dutch as a symbol of innocence, of resistance, one marked even by what David Wertheim explains are its 'religious overtones,' must therefore be analysed with some scepticism. Anne Frank, Wertheim (2009, 158) argues, 'has become a source of moral and religious values – of meaning – and has sometimes literally been described as a saint.' It has been argued that the process of re-narrativisation, most notably the first and most successful theatre version to date (Goodrich & Hackett), *The Diary* and its young refugee writer have been subject to Americanisation. It has subsequently become a truly transnational war narrative: *The Diary* and its German-born author have been appropriated by the Dutch and mostly by Americans as a symbol of innocence and hope after death. It has turned into education's global humanist Bible of ethical and cultural values (cf. Stephens and McCallum). Indeed, which government and tourist office would refuse a *saint* figure wielding such a powerful icon as national symbol?

The eyes of millions of tourists visiting Amsterdam are certain to meet those of the most famous fifteen-year-old girl in the world, staring at them from the cover of her book set prominently between the tourist guides as they pass the newspaper stands in the tax-free area of the airport. A short walk from Central Station to the local tourist office, and amongst the droves of miniature clogs, tulips, cheese, and cannabis plants, tourists are stimulated to download the 'Anne Frank App' to help guide them through the Dutch capital.[87] How different this 21st-century welcome for tourists is, to that of the very few

surviving Jews upon their return to Amsterdam, after the horrors of the Holocaust in Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen. During the Second World War close to 75% of Dutch Jews were deported. In fact, 'the Netherlands is the only Western European country whose rates of Jewish deportation and murder resemble those of an Eastern European country' (Wolf 2007, 55). The few who returned to their houses, like Otto Frank hoping for an unlikely reunion with their kin, often found them occupied. Most of those who could reoccupy their house were sent a huge bill for outstanding hereditary tenure fees to the Amsterdam municipality, plus an extra fine for late payment.[88]

'A likely candidate for the explanation of the high victimisation rate in the Netherlands,' Marnix Croes (2006, 494) explains, 'is the ferocious hunt for Jews in hiding in some parts of this country.' Like Anne Frank's betrayer, these Dutch collaborators and Nazi informants received 7.5 guilders per Jew they gave up, and some of them made thousands of guilders from this line of work (Van Liempt 2016). Whereas the "World Holocaust Remembrance Center Yad Vashem" in Jerusalem highlights the tragic and wholesale betrayal of Jews in the Netherlands, back in the Netherlands it is a part of Dutch memory that is being repressed and in danger of being forgotten altogether.[89] Dutch national heroine Anne Frank was victim of a Dutch bounty hunter, yet this plays only a peripheral role in the cultural landscape of the Netherlands. Worse still, 'the hunt for Jews in hiding in Amsterdam' by Dutch police and Nazi sympathizers was 'more severe' than in other parts of the Netherlands (Croes 2006, 490). For my pupils, scholarly revisions such as these shed new light on Anne Frank and her narrative, providing a more complete background to *The Diary,* and explain the willingness of Dutch society to adopt Anne Frank as their 'saint' figure.

Given the previously stated power of 'pathos formula' prose such as *The Diary* to shape the canon and its ability to create 'collective identities,' to legitimise 'political power' and to uphold 'value systems,' in the words of Astrid Erll, this story contributes to re-writing the Dutch memory of World War II from a narrative of compliant witnesses to innocent suppressed. The 'inherent didacticism' (Myers 2008) and 'ideological tenor' (Butler & O'Donovan 2012) of *The Diary* complement this, making it an even more powerful memory-shaping tool. Glossed over is the fact that despite the Dutch hospitality towards Jewish German refugees such the Frank family, and the help given them in hiding, they were all betrayed nonetheless, 'following information from a Dutch informer' for just a handful of guilders (Schnabel in Frank 1993, 278). Since her narrative does not involve

the Annex inhabitants' betrayal, arrest, deportation and death, its relatively optimistic tone remains intact, and thus susceptible to becoming the dominant memory.

War narratives like *The Diary* are 'markers of prosthetic memory,' that evoke 'both pleasure and pain' with my Dutch pupils (Plain 2017, xiv). Bearing in mind the tendency for children's war narratives to be so didactically and pedagogically idealistic, the critique being that such stories often 'sugar-coat' the darkest realities of history (Weissman 2004), in order to 'negate the likelihood of secondary traumatization' (Kertzer 2008), my pupils' 'magical' selections from the text that evoke pain are all the more significant.

Magic Moment IV

> To our great sorrow and dismay, we've heard that many people have changed their attitude towards us Jews. We've been told that anti-Semitism has cropped up in circles where once it would have been unthinkable. This fact has affected us all very, very deeply. […] It's being said in underground circles that the German Jews who emigrated to Holland before the war and have now been sent to Poland shouldn't be allowed to return here. […] The war isn't even over, and already there's dissension and Jews are regarded as lesser beings. […] To be honest, I can't understand how the Dutch, a nation of good, honest, upright people, can sit in judgement on us the way they do. […] And if they carry out this terrible threat, the meagre handful of Jews still left in Holland will have to go. (Frank 2002, 301-2)

It is clear from the start that by pinpointing this particularly painful episode in Dutch history, some of my pupils are looking for a fight. Egbert gets really fired up over the current tides of turmoil and the rise of populism in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe, as nations creak and bend under the strain of the biggest surge of immigrants since World War II. IS-terror attacks continue to pervade Europe at the moment of writing, Egbert argues, and therefore Anne's diary entry above highlights the dangers Dutch society faces today, he concludes. Unconsciously, Egbert makes use of the 'parallels between the time depicted and that of composition,' his reading and selection of this excerpt in class, which is an 'established tradition of historical writing' (Butler and O'Donovan 2012, 12). Egbert's point is that the diary's example of anti-Semitism prevalent in Dutch society as the strain of the Nazi occupation began to take its toll towards the end of World War II, is

a real danger in Dutch society 70 years later, as tolerance towards Muslim minorities in the Netherlands begins to dwindle and descend into outward hostility.

Egbert's concerns with the current polarisation within Dutch society act as a 'booster station to intensify the immediacy of the past' (Butler and O'Donovan 2012, 12). And 'intensify' it does, for though some of this squad of pupils agree with his point of view, it is Ingeborg who objects vehemently to what she believes is a simplistic way of coding the past seen through Anne Frank's eyes, as a moral lesson for current problems. There are 'too many [Islamic] refugees entering the Netherlands', Ingeborg comments, and it is a fact that 'terror attacks are linked to Islam.' She continues her argument, saying that it is too easy to "compare people who are concerned about these issues to Dutch anti-Semites during World War II, just for saying so."[90] Egbert had resorted to using the historical moral metaphor in Anne's story to prescribe for his class a warning of tolerance towards immigrants. Yet Ingeborg was resisting this foul-tasting moral medicine being shoved down her throat. The example shows my pupils are the primary owners of the educational process as the intrinsic motivation of the task team was now heightened to boiling point. I observe my class is enjoying this discussion, rediscovery and re-evaluation of *The Diary*, even amongst those who were most opposed (Egbert) to its place on their current curriculum.

Teachers using *The Diary* in the classroom, or any war narrative for that matter, should avoid taking sides in the various force fields' debates, but rather involve pupils in them, pointing them to the potential power of canonical moral didacticism of children's war narratives. At this moment in the educational process, having created task ownership with my students and witnessing the ensuing discussion, I pointed out to them another part of Gary Weissman's research. Weissman (2004, 12) stresses the dangers of 'sweetening' the Holocaust, as well as the danger of 'trivializing' and 'universalizing' the Holocaust. Whereas 'trivializing' the Holocaust occurs when the narrative fails 'to honour the gravity or magnitude of the Nazi genocide, […] universalizing occurs when the historical specificity of the Nazi persecution of the Jews is compromised or neglected'. In this way, Weissman explains, 'the Holocaust is divested of its historical specificity in order to be valued as a symbol or archetype' (ibid.). My pupils had used Egbert's excerpt, portraying Dutch anti-Semitism during World War II, as a universal symbol for a discussion on 21st-century xenophobia and racism.

One of the greatest difficulties when putting (war) literature on the curriculum,

especially when the text in question is novel size and length, is to create that 'intrinsic motivation' for pupils to read. The Catch-22 with war texts, and Holocaust narratives specifically, is that motivation is often achieved through students' identification with the narratives' subject, setting and characters. Yet this is precisely what Weissman argues leads to a 'universalized' version of the Holocaust. The central question to the paradox is whether students *need* to know 'about the when, where and why of the Holocaust in order to grasp its significance as a moral paradigm' (Weissman 2004, 13). Empathy for a character like Anne Frank is a great motivator for pupils to (continue) read(ing) her diary. And yet, as a 21st-century reader, empathy with Anne can lead to her predicament being 'dejudaized' (Weissman 2004, 12). Ilana Abramovitch (2012, 168), for instance, asks the question whether 'empathizing with Anne' makes it 'difficult, if not impossible, for some students to come to terms with the details of her arrest, imprisonment and death?' Since none of the 'Semi-Matured' have been arrested or imprisoned on the basis of their race and undergone the horrors of the concentration camps, how can they ever hope to grasp this vital aspect of Anne's fate, and that of more than six million Jews during the Holocaust?

Not having this experience either, I had told my students that teachers like myself are anxious to address the Holocaust and Anne Frank's fate in class. *The Diary* does not provide this information either, proving that 'sustained exploration of psychological trauma remains the exception rather than the rule' in children's narratives (Kertzer 2008, 208). And yet, the trend in children's war literature is changing, Kenneth Kidd (2008, 161) argues, for 'there seems to be consensus now that children's literature is the most rather than the least appropriate literary forum for trauma work.' Thus, for my pupils, 'subjects previously thought too upsetting are now deemed appropriate and necessary' (ibid.). The fact that my pupils, despite the narrative constraints of Anne's iconic children's book, actively select what are potentially the most upsetting parts of Anne's narrative, serves to underscore this trend.

Magic Moment V

> The ack-ack guns make so much noise you can't hear your own voice. […] I was shivering, as if I had a temperature, and begged Father to relight the candle. He was adamant: there was to be no light. Suddenly we heard a burst of machine-gun fire, and that's ten times worse than anti-aircraft

> guns. Mother jumped out of bed and, to Pim's great annoyance, lit the candle. Her resolute answer to his grumbling was, 'After all, Anne is not an ex-soldier!' (Frank 2002, 86)

As I stressed earlier, contrary to the dominance of 'combat gnostic' poets in the canon of First World War narratives, as far as the Second World War was concerned, the best-selling book was not written by a soldier but by a civilian. The noise of war rages right above Anne Frank's bedroom, giving her 'bags under her eyes from lack of sleep' (Frank 2002, 98). McLoughlin (2011, 23) explains that 'conflict announces or expresses itself through noise and commotion,' and this clamour of war is no longer confined to the battlefield, a secluded and cordoned off warzone, and thus of relative safety to non-combatants: this was total war. Though Anne is indeed, as her mother snaps to her father at night, 'not an ex-soldier,' she is affected by the violence of the sounds of war in daily civilian life in occupied Amsterdam.

The 'first reporter of war is war itself,' argues McLoughlin, 'the boom and crackle and whine and thud of weaponry' (ibid.). Unwittingly struck by the noise of war, these students had selected more examples from the diary that illustrated the violent 'thuds' of war and the terror they inspired in the young writer. 'It still makes me shiver to think of the dull, distant drone that signified the approaching destruction,' Anne writes (Frank 2002, 112), as Amsterdam suffered under successive allied bombardments during the summer of 1943. 'After washing-up,' another pupil-selected excerpt reads, 'another air-raid warning, gunfire and swarms of planes. […] The planes dived and climbed, the air was abuzz with the drone of engines. It was very scary' (Frank 2002, 114). In the meantime, news from the outside world brought the occupants of the secret annexe news of traditional battlefields, with Allied armies fighting in Italy the same summer. 'The British have landed in Sicily and Father's all set for a "quick finish,"' Anne writes (2002, 107), as they kept visceral track of the advance on a map, which is still a feature in the museum today. Yet, as McLoughlin (2011, 23) dictates, 'war insists on drowning all other noise, deafening peacetime discourses.' The war in Amsterdam 'demand[s] complete attention' from its inhabitants, as much as the battle in Italy does from its soldiers (ibid.).

It was telling that my pupils had brought these excerpts forward, precisely because they described violence. It proved McLoughlin's theory worked not only during wartime itself, but also within its narrative frame: within this children's war narrative the sounds

of war proved very literally to be a salient reporter of war to them, and the examples in the text my students were drawn to underscore this point. This relatively violent literary selection made by my students is critically believed to be an exception to the rule of what Anne Frank's diary is about. As Kate Agnew and Geoff Fox (2001, 154) explain, 'the diary chronicles the daily lives of the hidden families but their confinement inevitably means that few events occur to interest either Anne or indeed her readers.' Not for the first time, the students I taught were drawn like moths to the flame of war stories' portrayal of violent noise, as I have shown in the earlier chapter, for example, to First World War combat poet Robert Nichols's 'rage to kill' amid the 'hurricane of shell' in his trench poem 'The Assault' (1918, 58-59). This first selection of 'magical moments' confirmed that teenagers are not at all averse to a role as voyeurs of violence. Consciously and unconsciously, they seek out pockets of war action, even in this supposedly uneventful children's war story.

The in-class intervention, seeking magical moments, proves *The Diary* does not divert as completely from war's horror as some critics argue, although its young readers do remain sheltered against the dark outcome of Anne's fate. Judging from the relish with which my students have chosen the violent sounds and terrible fears Anne Frank is beset by, then, answering Abramovitch question, 'empathizing with Anne' does not prevent them from coming to terms with the realities of a life in hiding in a city at war. In fact, my teenagers actively search for those 'few events' that do interest them, and the results are remarkably violent. Thus the 'shift away from the idea that young readers should be protected from evil' seems to have the wholehearted support of my perusing pupils (K. Kidd 2008, 161). Their motivations were a mixed bag of narrative thrill-seeking and searching for 'an unmediated Truth' about war (Campbell 1999, 207), to which as I have shown, 'only those who have undergone the liminal trauma of combat have access:' the warrior poets (ibid.). My pupils are interested in the 'autopsy' (McLoughlin 2011, 42) of *The Diary's* narrator, drawn to the non-fictional 'thuds' that pockmark it. It thus breaks with the canonical boundaries and proves war not to be 'an exclusively combatant, and […] masculine experience,' though *The Diary* is limited in what it illustrates of Anne's experience nonetheless (ibid.). For Anne, there was no 'quick recovery,' (Kertzer 2008, 207), and exposing this would mean to literally move beyond her diary.

Out-of-Class Intervention Stopping Point II: The Road to Liberation

My pupils lack of revulsion and moral indignation at the prospect of witnessing the remainders of the world's worst wound (Sassoon 1983, 153) made me anxious to seek ways to 'present the moral complexity of the Holocaust experience' to my 21st-century students, who were 'accustomed to basing their conduct on stable value systems' (Langer 1998, 190). This I hoped would both prepare my pupils to their impending visit and somehow guide their eagerness to becoming the voyeur, a wish I had also witnessed when I introduced students to the graphic horror of First World War combat poetry. One way of doing this is by 'multiplying voices' of the Second World War and the Holocaust experience in general, and Anne's experience in particular (ibid.). As a teacher-scholar with direct access to the archive, purposeful to reveal 'the painful events after the Annex inhabitants' arrest by the Nazis,' I realised that the tracks left by young Anne did not have to be the only ones to follow on our way to Bergen-Belsen. For it was exactly 70 years ago that the 11th armoured division of the British army travelled along the same roads to Bergen-Belsen, liberating it on April 15th 1945, causing war reporter Richard Dimbleby to report back upon the horrific trail this army unit had unexpectedly taken (Flanagan and Bloxham 2005, i-xviii).

> I have just returned from the Belsen concentration camp. […] I find it hard to describe adequately the horrible things I have seen and heard today. But here, unadorned, are the facts. […] Beyond the barrier was a swirling cloud of dust, the dust of thousands of slowly moving people, laden in itself with the deadly typhus germ. And with the dust was a smell, sickly and thick, the smell of death and decay, of corruption and filth. I passed through the barrier and found myself in the world of nightmare. Dead bodies, some of them in decay, lay strewn about the road and along the rutted track. On each side of the road were brown wooden huts. […] Behind the huts two youths and two girls, who'd found a morsel of food, were sitting together on the grass in picnic fashion, sharing it. They were not six feet from a pile of decomposing bodies. (Dimbleby 2005, xi-xii)

Dimbleby's BBC despatch is 'a landmark in the history of broadcasting,' David Lowther writes, and after an initial period of disbelief, it was followed some days later by

newspapers publishing a few photographs (Lowther 2015, 117). The full bulk of horrific pictures were left to be viewed in especially designed reading rooms across the country. Parents were warned 'that young children should not be taken to see these pictures,' the *Daily Express* reported on 21 April 1945.[91] Doing precisely the opposite, I showed both pictures of the victims of Bergen-Belsen featuring the corpses of children, and Dimbleby's report, highlighting the lugubrious child picnic amongst the dead and dying. Despite my pupils' cognitive knowledge of what happened to Anne Frank, there was an undercurrent present during the extra-curricular classes with these young Dutch girls and boys, a wish to see the horror for themselves, to gain their own much admired 'autopsy.' The authenticity of Dimbleby's report had moved them but had simultaneously made their desire to follow in the footsteps of reporters and combat soldiers liberating the camps even stronger.

Looking for clues to finding Anne Frank, accounts like these from war reporter Dimbleby, however shocking the glimpse of the girls' picnic was, gave them a sense of getting closer to the full story of the girl they had been raised with. Another war correspondent, the Jewish-American Meyer Levin, vowed to make sure 'the world would learn what had happened with the Jews during the War' after he had seen the camps like Dimbleby had (Wertheim 2009, 161). Levin, choosing other forms than the war report to tell his story to the broader public, 'was one of the first to call for an adaptation of the diary of Anne Frank into a play,' David Wertheim explains, believing the diary had 'the potential to fulfil that mission but also that it could do so best if it were translated into other media' (ibid.). Levin wanted maximum exposure of Anne's diary narrative; 'it should be on television and on radio' he argued, convinced that any loss of detail would be 'compensated for by an experience which pretends to be more real as it is more direct' (ibid.). His appeal did not miss its effect: Levin's legacy is still tangible in the streets of Amsterdam 70 years later, filled with neon lit signs advertising for *Anne*, the theatre show.

The irony is that the remediated story of Anne Frank, though touching millions globally, was ultimately a narrative that inspired what Gary Weissman (2004, 12) termed the 'universalization,' 'trivializing,' and 'sweetening' of that ultimate event of horror. It was the 'widespread success of a play adapted from it, and a film,' John Berryman (2013, 48) explains, that had made the diary into a 'sentimental' global hit. To my Dutch pupils, all of whom have been raised with these remediations as part of their lives on a recurring educational basis, the 'sentimentality' of *The Diary* had become the 'normative status,'

(Rawlinson 2007, 114). Anne Frank's diary had taught my students that they 'need not know much about the when, where and why of the Holocaust in order to grasp its significance as a moral paradigm' (Weissman 2004, 13). However, reintroducing them to the diary in this later stage of their teenage years, as well as involving them in the societal, political and academic discussions that pervade this 'pathos formula' narrative and activating them via the task-based learning exercise in creating their own testimony and reading experience of the diary and their journey to its unrecorded end, had all served to make them break beyond the sentimental epigrammatic narrative legacy of Anne Frank's diary as it was embedded in their collective memories.

Their initial antipathy to reading this icon of children's war literature had dissipated, and I had managed to turn their relatively huge prior knowledge of Anne Frank's diary in all its forms into the driving motivational force to complete their film-task. Now hoping to get even closer to understanding what Anne went through, especially after the story they knew so well ends abruptly in the summer of 1944, the task-team pupils were making huge efforts 'to feel, to experience *something*, whatever would enable [them] to overcome [their] sense of estrangement from the Holocaust past,' (Weissman 2004, 4-5). In short, despite having 'no direct experience of the Holocaust' they had become 'nonwitnesses,' a phrase coined by Gary Weissman (2004, 4), 'deeply interested in studying, remembering and memorializing it.' By focussing on embedding *The Diary* in their educational task, I consciously and necessarily limited my research in scope as well as genre. My pupils' voyeuristic wishes, however, necessitated us to break through the 'invented tradition' of using children's war narratives in education as introduction to the Holocaust. I was forced to open the archive up ever so slightly, to unlock the 'combat gnostic' narratives testifying to the horror of travelling in Anne's footprints.

During the Second World War, 'the catastrophic effects of aerial bombardment, Nazism, and the Holocaust affected everyone, not only the armed forces,' argues Hugh Haughton (2007, 423). This total war caused a blurring of the distinctions between soldier and civilian. In fact, continues Haughton, the 'line between the field of battle and ordinary life broke down' (ibid.). Thus, World War II caused the disappearance of 'the traditional distinction between soldier and civilian' (Howard 2009, 1340). With this watershed, civilians, including women and children, acquired 'first-hand experience' of war: a 'crucial ingredient' to authenticity in 'war reporting' (McLoughlin 2011, 42). During World War I, soldier's tales were both consoling and salient to their readers in mourning, which was

reason enough for anthologists to omit women's verse. It would take women's poetry of the First World War at least three quarters of a century to break beyond the masculine canonical dominance, yet here was a story written by a civilian *girl* who, within a decade after the Second World War had ended, 'became the emblematic wartime child,' (Trumpener 2016, 506), and the canonical author of World War II.

Out-of-Class Intervention Stopping Point III: In a German Wood

So 'where are the War Poets?' I wondered, as my pupils and I ventured our journey to World War II's deepest scars.[92] Besides Dimbleby's war reports, I sought to delve into the genre, which had proven such a powerful one in Scotland and on the battlefields of Ypres and the Somme. 'Common wisdom has it,' Harvey Shapiro (2011, 3) argues, 'that the poets of World War I left us a monument and the poets of World War II did not.' This might be because World War II 'represents the nation's best self,' and the literature that reflects this 'is not canonical' (Rawlinson 2009, 209). 'Poems about the horrors of the trenches were originally written to stir the ignorant and complacent people at home,' war poet Robert Graves (1949, 311) explains in 1942. Potential poets 'will not feel obliged to write horrifically' about 'the terrors of an air raid,' he continues, because of a universal sense of 'justice of the British cause' (ibid.). The veteran poet glosses over the fact that many felt exactly that way about World War I two years into that war. The real issue at hand involves notions of entitlement and authenticity. The mechanisation of war and conscription of the armies had democratised the experience of war in such a way that World War II was, on all accounts, a total war. Where once the experience of warfare had been unique to soldiers only, now they could not be sure their 'rendezvous with death [was] more certain than that of [their] Aunt Fanny, the firewatcher,' as Graves (1949, 310) comments wryly.

With the floodgates to writing about war thus wryly opened, driving professional poets to reticence, it is no surprise when Hölbling estimates 'between 1500 and 2200 American World War II novels' to have been written about '"the good war" as the Second World War came to be known' (Hölbling 2009, 209). Having such vast amounts of novels at my disposal was no help, for my pupils' time and motivation were not on my side. Getting my pupils to read novel-length literature was a battle that teachers had been losing steadily. Both poetry's short form and its immeasurable depth make the genre ideal for classroom use, where lessons are often broken up in lengths varying from 40 to 60

minutes long. Put simply, 'poetry tends to be short, self-contained, and well suited to practising linguistic and stylistic analysis.'[93] Despite these benefits, I am surprised to find there is a 'widespread ignorance of Second World War poetry,' which Jon Stallworthy (2014, xxxv) argues is a 'curriculum imbalance that educationalists should urgently correct.' Although Stallworthy declines to swallow his own medicine, for the vast majority of his anthology selection consists of First World War poems, I have been given the academic incentive to add poetry to my pupils' path to Bergen-Belsen.

For all the Second World War poets' supposed reticence there is 'an abundant body of poetry' available (Hölbling 2009, 209). In fact, Diederik Oostdijk (2011, 3) argues, 'World War II poets are believed to have been silent, but were actually extremely prolific,' something he calls the 'strange paradox' of World War II poetry. For 'American experiences of the Second World War,' Hölbling (2009, 212) argues, 'provided ample scope – and need – for storifying.' More than ever before, especially for the relatively young United States army, its troops 'faced a multitude of different theatres of operation and types of military action,' amongst which the horror they found when liberating the Nazi death camps (ibid.). In fact, on his way eastwards with the 97th Division, soldier poet Anthony Hecht (1923-2004) marched through defeated Germany to discover its Holocaust extermination camps and struggled to define their horrific impressions poetically (McClatchy 2016, ix-xiv). These lines from his poem 'More Light! More Light!' bear witness to his experiences:

> We move now to outside a German Wood.
> Three men are there commanded to dig a hole
> In which the two Jews are ordered to lie down
> And be buried alive by the third, who is a Pole. (Hecht 2016, 62-63)

Hecht, known for his verbosity, writes with a diction Oostdijk describes as 'deliberately lucid, stark and almost purely descriptive,' mixing the authenticity of the narrative power of his own experiences liberating Flossenbürg concentration camp with stories of Holocaust survivors.[94]

Never in the history of warfare to which poets have borne witness has 'man's inhumanity to man generate more eloquent testimony from more poets than in the two world wars,' Stallworthy (2014, xxxv) argues, 'the Second no less than the First.' Yet none

of my pupils can name a single Second World War poet when I hand out Hecht's frequently anthologised war poem. In contrast, the British poets of the Great War are steadily becoming frequently used narratives at Dutch secondary schools and thus appropriated into Dutch cultural memory. Adding a modest selection of combat poetry of World War II to my pupil's curriculum is a moderate but much needed contribution to the educational canon of teaching World War II narratives. Like World War I, Dutch have no 20th century literary tradition of soldier's narratives comparable to that of Britain, or the United States for that matter. Having no combat experience to act as muse during World War I due to Dutch neutrality, the veterans of May 1940 were beaten in a battle for the Netherlands that lasted only five days. Many of these so-called 'May-veterans' ended up in the Dutch police forces *and* amongst the Dutch volunteers for the German SS, estimated at twenty thousand (Hondius 2010, 212-15).

Besides this black page in the marginal role of the Dutch military, what is crucial to the remembrance of World War II in the Netherlands, is that Dutch forces did not liberate Holland (Hondius 2010, 213-14). In fact, extremely few Dutch soldiers were involved in the war, with just twelve hundred soldiers of the 'Prinses Irenebrigade' in active service, and even this unit merely performed a symbolic function. These combined factors have inhibited history writing from a Dutch national perspective (ibid.). By necessity, Dutch literary input was provided by civilians living in occupied Holland, of whom German-born refugee Anne Frank was the most successful exponent, complemented by heroic narratives of civil resistance. Now that I was literally travelling towards 'a German Wood' as Hecht writes, I want the poet to take 'the [Dutch] reader by the hand', in the words of Oostdijk (2011, 116), 'before illuminating this one horrific event that encapsulates the horror of Nazi Germany's cruelty.' As the plot evolves, the 'Pole' refuses to comply with the order and is told to 'change places with the Jews', only to be dug out again. Both Jews are finally buried alive and the Pole is 'shot in the belly' (Hecht 2016, 62-63). The last stanza shows great indebtedness to Hecht's literary combat forbear, Wilfred Owen, and his poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth,' juxtaposed below:

> No prayers or incense rose up in those hours
> Which grew to be years, and every day came mute
> Ghosts from the ovens, sifting through crisp air;
> And settled upon his eyes in a black soot. (Hecht 2016, 62-63)

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells,
And bugles calling for them from sad shires. (Owen 2014, xxxv)

The subtlety of Hecht's styled reference to the Great War poet is best illustrated when the lines written by the two war poets are placed next to each other as illustrated above. Right from the first line and the first heavily coded word 'No' negating everything to come, God importantly, Owen's 'mockeries' run cleverly parallel to Hecht's never sounding 'prayers,' a mockery like Owen's later prayers and his 'bells' not sounding parallel to Hecht's 'incense' not rising: religion is dead in both these poets' wars. The parallel continues, the 'mute Ghost' from Hecht's clever run-on line a silencing like Owen's 'voice of mourning' both beating their unheard beat to the iambic pentameter these poetic war rhythms are set to. By the end of Hecht's poem nothing is left of the dead but the 'soot' that compares to Dimbleby's 'dust' upon Bergen-Belsen's liberation, to which the Jews were burned like beasts in the Nazi ovens. The soot gently falls on the eyes of the 'Pole,' soothing before he dies too. Similarly, for those soon to die like 'cattle' in the trenches of World War I there is no consolation but Owen's 'sad' call of the 'bugles,' its gentle sound reaching the soldiers' ears in consolation, but soon drowned out by the 'shrill' sounds of war as they march to their deaths.

Hecht and Owen are out to get the 'costs acknowledged and the truths told,' which as I have previously shown, is a universal characteristic drive that war poets share (Kendall 2013, xxi). Hecht like his forebear Owen tries to face the reader with the facts of war within the semantic limits of poetry. Though it took him a belated twenty years to do so, it is a vital element connecting war narratives with each other, across time and space. Yeats famously criticised the 'blood, dirt and sucked sugar-stick' (Yeats 1940, 124) of Owen's war poems, stating that 'passive suffering is not a theme for poetry,' (Yeats 1936, xxxiv). Yet it is precisely the terse, languid and stifling elements of Hecht's verse which capture the passivity of the 'two Jews' and the 'Pole' in the face of their Nazi tormentor in perfect unison with the passive march of Owen's soldiers to their inevitable deaths. It is shocking to the young 21st-century reader, and yet provides a welcome contrast for my pupils to the tender register of Anne Frank, as well as a welcome continuation of where

her narrative ends. Building upon the giant shoulders of his predecessor Owen, Hecht hammers home to them what 'the final solution' meant for the young heroine who captured the hearts of millions.

Out-of-Class Intervention Stopping Point IV: Anne Frank Platz

'We move now to outside a German Wood,' Andries whispers ominously, the memorised words of Anthony Hecht ingrained in his brain as he navigated us off the motorway past Bremen and into a rural, woodland area towards the German town of Celle.[95] As the forest grew denser and darker, we took a sharp left turn and parked our car on the Anne Frank Platz, next to the museum of concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. The three girls in the back of the car had prophesied on what the effect of their afternoon visit to Anne Frank's place of death might be. As we met up with the rest of the group, I asked each pupil to join in front of the camera of Hubert's iPad and tell their expectations. 'I expect Bergen-Belsen to be just really overwhelming;' 'It will help put the future more in context [of the past];' 'It will have a huge effect on all of us;' 'I think it will be very confronting;' 'I expect it to be very emotional.'[96] These were no mean prophecies; my pupils were bracing themselves for an emotional collision. The last girl in line was Geesje, hesitantly waiting her turn. 'I hope…it is going to…change…the way I…see all these things…in my head,' she explained falteringly with the camera running, after which she quickly turned away, red faced and tears in her eyes.[97]

Elizabeth Baer has vouched for the importance and imminent need for 'a children's literature of atrocity' coupled with what she calls 'confrontational texts' (Baer 2000, 384). As 'nonwitnesses' to the Holocaust, and in particular the wish to witness Anne's fate, my pupils were irresistibly drawn to both Hecht's 'confrontational' narrative to break through the sugar-coated layer so often provided to children's war narratives to soften the blow of horror. Lawrence L. Langer argues that there is a need to 'use other narratives to amplify Anne Frank's diary' (Langer 1998, 190). The out-off-class intervention had done exactly this, juxtaposing the poets, reporters and ego-documents of the road to Bergen-Belsen, each pathos formula unleashing its power to signify what this concentration camp must have meant for Anne Frank and means to my pupils now. In fact, the sounds and sights of atrocity were getting so loud, that some in my task team, like Geesje, were beginning to break under the strain of the inescapable and deafening noise of the Holocaust's 'confrontational texts' combined with their visit to Bergen-Belsen. My

pupils moved into the memorial museum, where an exhibition focussed on 'memoirs of former prisoners,' and encouraged my teenagers to engage with these 'without pressure,' contributing their own 'knowledge and skills' in an 'interactive' way.[98] And so, camera in hand, they interacted with the sources, weaving the memory of Bergen-Belsen with their individual and collective memories of Anne Frank:

> I have seen many terrible sights in the last five years, but nothing, nothing approaching the dreadful interior of this hut in Belsen. The dead and the dying lay close together. I picked my way over corpse after corpse in the gloom until I heard one voice that rose above the gentle undulating moaning. I found a girl. A living skeleton. Impossible to gauge her age for she had practically no hair left on her head and her face was only a yellow parchment sheet with two holes in it for eyes. (Dimbleby, cited in Flanagan and Bloxham 2005, xii)

This time, Dimbleby's words smashed home to my pupils' hearts as they walked around like ghosts, moving from the sources on the panelled wall to the window bay overlooking the site of tragedy. 'But it's so peaceful here,' Andries whispered, Egbert adding 'it's beautiful,' some of the few words spoken as they walked mutely across the grassy fields along the path to where the disease ridden and over-crowded barracks had stood, one of which had housed Anne Frank.[99] Geesje and her friends were moving on silently, and keeping very close together, my pupils never letting me out of their sight. 'War museums fail to represent the war,' because 'there was then and is now no consensus as to what constituted *the war, wie es eigentlich gewesen war* – as it actually was' (Winter 2012, 152). My pupils reflect on these words as the self-styled 'Semi-Matured' were maturing by the minute, continuing their walk towards the place marking the grave of Anne Frank, their final stop. Reflecting on their experience, their expectations, Winter's admonition, the camera started rolling and one by one they broke down, some refused to speak and walked away, those who did strained to find words, rasping and halting, whispering, crying...

> Geesje: 'I'm just really…shocked and…disgusted by what people are capable of doing to each other…'

> Egbert: 'It felt so beautiful and it felt like a beautiful walk in the park today but on the other hand it…you know that all these mass graves…lie here…'
> Hubert: 'The area just didn't add up with the stories that have happened here…and that really…scared me…'
> Jantina: 'After walking through this forest I think I have a picture of how things…must have…gone here…'
> Riekje: 'It's just…that…people… can't do this… they got the message… thank God…'

My task team was in crisis. Nothing in their life-long education about Anne Frank, the Second World War and the Holocaust had prepared them for this. Dienke Hondius (2010, 83, 97) explains that during the '50s, history education in the Netherlands promoted 'patriotism and national pride.' The late '60s and '70s is the period when the history of the persecution of the Jews comes to the foreground. The 'Anne Frank Huis' in Amsterdam functioned as a place where one could talk freely and address sensitive issues of the war, which were not 'discussed at home' or at school (Hondius 2010, 100). It was during this period that *The Diary* was embedded in education, breaking the war generation's silence. *The Diary* turned out to be a powerful weapon for their children, who in their revolutionary wake applied its power as a moral paradigm in the maelstrom of protests against the Vietnam War, the 50-year commemoration of what Ian Parsons termed the 'Holocaust of the Somme' and as accusation against their parents generation of perpetrators.

Thus, the Holocaust attaches itself as a 'floating signifier to historically very different situations,' (Huyssen 2003, 99). The '60s surge of First World War poetry anthologies and their use in British classrooms might well have been influenced by the delayed literary reaction in response to the Holocaust. 'It is twenty years now, Father. I have come home,' Hecht wrote as late as 1967, in his haunting war poem 'Rites and Ceremonies.' Hecht's memory of the Holocaust is 'home.' *The Diary* preceded his reaction by those twenty years, its success due to its 'sentimental' remediation. The Diary's central place in education of the '60s, coupled with the war poems of Sassoon and Owen, served as catalyst to a surge in World War II and Holocaust representations. Together these pathos formula war narratives proved their incredible power when applied in education.

They have shaped a lasting canon from within, attached to each other as 'floating signifiers' of memory, advocating a lesson of warning.

Meanwhile, I was left standing in the middle of Anne Frank Platz with a dishevelled bunch of teenagers. Gone was their adventurousness and excitement, their youthful gusto. The glint in their eyes was dulled, washed away by the tears many had shed at witnessing what was left of the horror that took away Anne's life and so many others. From the outset, I had expressed my anxiety regarding their willingness to play the voyeur and their initial lack of protest, revulsion or indignation at our impending field trip. As their teacher, I had instigated the process to which I gradually became an observer: their transformation into 'nonwitnesses' of the Holocaust. Shoshana Felman argues that 'in the era of the Holocaust, of Hiroshima, of Vietnam – in the age of testimony – teaching must in turn testify, make something happen' (1995, 56). Felman goes on to argue that teaching, like psychoanalysis, has to 'live through a crisis,' for 'both are called upon to be performative, and not just cognitive' (ibid.). These pupils who now found themselves in a former World War II concentration camp, had departed from the 'sugar-coated,' and 'muted' diary of Anne Frank. They had done so via the 'magical moments' they had brought forward in class, and out-of-class by exploring the road Anne was forced to take, passing through the gateway of the darkest place imaginable.

Showing my pupils the larger literary-historical and cultural significance of *The Diary* has proven the gateway to the crisis my pupils were now facing. Children's literature is the '*most* rather than the *least* appropriate literary forum for trauma work,' Kidd (2008, 161) argues. True as this may be, my task team had sought welcome help from 'adult' narratives by journalists such as Richard Dimbleby and poets such as Anthony Hecht to provide the extra colour to the pages Anne Frank left blank. Through Hecht's 'German Wood' to the 'two Jews' being buried alive by 'a Pole,' walking further passed the barracks Dimbleby describes of which now nothing more remained than its overgrown foundations, were once youngsters had their lugubrious 'picnic' amongst the dead, right up to meeting the 'girl's' eyes like 'a living skeleton.' All the while my pupils where getting closer to finding Anne Frank.

My pupils had become 'obsessed' with Anne Frank, and now 'entirely at a loss, disoriented' and literally 'uprooted,' for here they were in Bergen-Belsen, a far cry from home (1995, 50). Closer than ever, emotionally and spatially, my pupils were in an ideal position to create a testimony. For having made this happen, it was now my job to 'resume

authority as the teacher of the class, and bring the students back into significance' (Felman 1995, 50). Basing her theory on her experience of Holocaust teaching that had resulted into a class breaking into an unprecedented crisis, Felman advises her students to view their end product, a paper, as 'their testimony' to the course (1995, 54). This squad of students had wielded their camera during the entire out-of-class intervention because I had constantly reminded them of the necessity to film, to record a process to which this chapter in turn stands as testimony. My pupils had created a 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg 2004, 2) of the Holocaust in relation to the fate of Anne Frank. It was a jumbled mix of footprints that included their heroine's, those of combat gnostic soldier poet Hecht and journalist Dimbleby, but also their own Dutch tread.

This chapter set out to examine tenderness of canonical war narratives by and for children, such as Anne Frank's literary footsteps and the legacy it had in the collective cultural memory of my pupils. The harsh and brutal 'costs' and 'truths' of combat poet Hecht and war reporter Dimbleby confronted with the endgame, notwithstanding the physical reality of a former concentration camp. For my pupils this had transformed the diary's legacy into something ultimately more brutal. It shows that the equivocal distinctions between adult war literature and children's war literature are blurred: adult Holocaust literature and spatial narrative of a Nazi concentration camp enable this children's narrative to be reappraised and give voice to the pages that have been left blank. What this chapter has hoped to show is that the ideals of children's narratives don't stick. It is the 'ur-terror' adults tend to 'pussyfoot' around, quoting Lore Segal, which attract and lures teenagers, making a lasting mark upon their memories. It is the 'ur-terror' of Owen's gas-attack in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' as well as the deeply imbedded terror of *The Diary* uncovered via my pupil's magic moments, which continue to draw pupil readers to war narratives. In the next chapter my teacher-reader will discover whether the same holds true when pupils watch movies portraying the ur-terrors of the Vietnam War.

This chapter set out to take yet another qualitative analytical step beyond the boundaries of First World War poetry, and into the realm of a different war, a different genre, both applied to a unique and selected set of pupils. I hope to have shown my (Dutch) teacher-reader that a renewed introduction to *The Diary*, though fraught with the pitfalls of pupils resistance and lack of motivation, has uncovered some literary pearls in the form of so-called magic moments. Allowing pupils to rediscover and reappraise the

canonical war narrative themselves and discussing this in peer-to-peer group sessions, strengthened pupil's autonomy, activated their intrinsic interests and addressed their social motivation (Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends 2017). Given the low motivation on the outset of the extra-curricular course, and the tantalising supposition that Owen's poetry and Anne Frank's diary are both adult stories read by children, confounding the boundaries of genre even more, the next chapter promises to offer similar literary solutions to pupils in bigger turmoil and lower in motivation than the students portrayed here. Crossing over into yet another era and war, namely the Vietnam war, and to its 'natural form' of narrative output, quoting McLoughlin (2011), namely Vietnam war movies, I will analyse their pearls and pitfalls when applying them in education.

Exposing children to war and its horrors, the flipside of tenderness, as an educational tool to prevent war in the future, is the cornerstone of teaching children's literatures of war. This chapter and its interventions cannot conclude that by putting war literature and specifically, literature written by a child on the curriculum that war and Holocaust has been prevented for the future. Yet it remains teachers' eternal role to keep opening doors for their students, even when they lead to the darkest realms of humanity and guide them on their various explorations, whatever the outcome. In the case of the Holocaust, 'they are obliged to open doors of impossibility, an equally compelling but more arduous task, because the obstacles to gaining entrance are so many, the usual rewards so few' (L. Langer 1998, 198). All we can do, teachers and pupils alike, is take the medicine and testify. Taking the beautiful risk was terrifying, yet having done so I hope to inspire my teacher-reader to do the same, intervening to take pupils on an out-of-the classroom literary field trip. Ultimately, this chapter is a testimony of how I, as a human being and, fundamental to this book, a teacher and scholar, by applying war narratives in and outside the classroom, try to help explain the way my pupils 'see all these things in [their] head[s],' quoting my pupil Geesje at the gates of the 'unimaginable,' and make them imagine it. All my pupils can do, is testify.

Epilogue

*Shoshana Felman argues that in the 'event of teaching' in the era of the Holocaust, the recipients of the information, in all its performativity and testimonial of nature, must, importantly, look back at having '*transformed themselves*' (Felman 1995, 56). Entering my classroom at the end of a busy school day a year and a half later, are Egbert, Gerda, Gezina, Ingeborg, Clasina and Jantina...*

'Look, there are the 'Semi-Matured,' see them sitting together again,' I say welcoming them. They laugh shyly, looking at each other somewhat coyly. The magic that bound them during their earlier school days has gone, the fire that lit between them is spent. They are on their way to adulthood, away from this school. 'You are the Matured now,' I say, and they instantly get me. Scottish ice is broken. Their old teach is speaking plainly to them. 'I'm writing my own testimonial chapter about our experiences traveling to Bergen-Belsen, and I had a couple of questions. Looking back, how has the trip and the task, short though it was, affected you?'

Ingeborg is the first to answer and focuses on the early career opportunities that had been given to her, explaining that on the back of the experience of having made yet another task, and its success, meriting a presentation at the closing conference of the PETALL project. 'The second task was even more successful than the first, and I was happy that our school and our task team got selected to go to the conference, that Geesje and Andries and I could go.' Gezina nods and adds 'it was great to be together Sir, we had fun, and it was such an experience designing our task at the German school and presenting it to our peers there.' Getting all boisterous and worked up now, sitting down relaxedly and laughing together, I decide to pop the big question.

'What about Belsen though?'

They react quickly, interrupting each other… 'That was…I'll never forget that again Sir…' 'It was like a park but why do I remember it so clearly…?' 'It was horrible… 'Riekje,' someone said, and they all repeated her name several times in assent. 'Riekje, Riekje. Riekje…'

Asking Gerda if she remembers being affected before the visit, she nods silently, and adds: 'but after Riekje broke down in front of the camera, it was worse, way worse. Even when I think about it now.' Egbert nods, saying 'you know, I have been brought up with

stories of resistance told by my grandfather, who hid cheese from the Germans. Cheese! It's pathetic really, compared to…you know…'

'Yeah, I had that,' Gerda adds, 'my grandmother was in a camp though, in Indonesia. I guess that's kinda the same, but I never talked about it with my family.' Suddenly, the most silent of all, Jantina, speaks up.

'You know sir, all of us had read Anne Frank's diary already when you asked us to re-read it. And to be honest, some refused to re-read it despite your pleading right until the day of departure, and I'm not naming names. We had all been to the Anne Frank Huis too, all of us, not together, but during our separate primary school careers. And I have even had the honour of meeting Miep Gies, who came to talk at my school when I was young, and she was still alive. Did you know she lived in Hoorn? Everyone in Hoorn knew Miep Gies, she was world famous and came to speak at so many schools when we were still very young. And still...still I did not understand, really understand what the story of Anne Frank was about. Going to Bergen-Belsen changed us forever. We completed the story sir, when we went to Belsen. We completed the story.'[100]

A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things they have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil. (O'Brien 2015, 77)

4. Directing Scenes of War

Building *Bildung*: Vietnam War Movies in the 21st Century Classroom as Gateway to Pupil Citizenship

Things fell apart right from the start. Unceremoniously shacked up in a different classroom than my own, the lights failing, the last rays of November sunlight blocked by a large looming fence directly opposite the murky windows, I tried to switch on the projector for the third time. My desk still in dismal array, I turned my hopeful eye to the old-fashioned blackboard, crammed with the past tense of the grammar lesson before, but still the lopsided and shakily hanging canvas front of the board projected nothing more than an error sign at its centre. Then the dreaded sound, the bell buzzing its relentless level tone, the gaggle of juveniles spreading out in their preciously selected peer groups. Segregated in the nooks and crannies of their 19th-century school building, the morning break of these 21st-century children is pierced to its end. I have only five minutes to get this lesson straight, and despite my decade's worth of experience dealing with this fight against time, I feel the beads of anxiety starting to form droplets on my back as the first sullen teenagers shuffle in to find a seat. Soon the tide is loosened as more and more boys and a few girls, in twos and threes, silently file in as if on their mournful way to their funerals instead of an afternoon lesson of English.

It was Monday morning, the first day at school after the Paris terror attacks of Friday 13 November 2015. What had been a Parisian evening out enjoying football, music and dinner turned into a nightmare attack by Islamic State, killing 130 people and wounding many more.[101] The shock of the deadliest attack in France since the Second World War reverberated throughout Europe and The Netherlands.[102] That Monday morning after, I was battling time to adhere to the European Union's call for a one-minute silence to be held at noon. This was precisely the moment I would be teaching what was

arguably the toughest gang of scarred and hardened teens I had taught for a long time.[103] The animosity in this group had been palpable for months, getting them to come to school and my lesson was difficult, to produce any work nigh on impossible. Things had reached boiling point only the week before, when, leaving the classroom for a moment I came back to find several boys in a tremendous fight, throwing tables, ripping curtains and knocking down cupboards, all the while egged on by a raucous cackle of swearing and shouting classmates. How on earth was I going to lull this class into a silent and respectful quietude, even for just a minute, at noon that day?

Walking wearily to school that morning, I passed Andries and Geesje and smiled, remembering why I felt so worn out. The previous week, just five days before the attacks in Paris, we had stood together at the gates of Bergen-Belsen. Geesje's heartfelt words jogged my memory. How would I be able to help explain 'the way [they] see all these things in [their] head[s],' I wondered, if I couldn't stop this class from clawing at each other during an everyday English grammar lesson?[104] I was just back from this mission for the Dutch Secretary of State for Education, addressing war and the Holocaust with pupils, via my literary interventions. And here was the European Union forcing me to address yet another form of conflict in the classroom. With the force-fields' expectations thus pressing upon me, I had no time to design an entire course or to rely on the 'pathos formula' narratives that had proven their worth teaching both World Wars. Therefore, I resolved to seek out the online advice of my peers. Shortly after the Charlie Hebdo attacks earlier that year, a group of Dutch teachers had come together to discuss the best ways of addressing such sensitive topics in class. Their advice is summed up as follows: 'Talking helps – provide information – emotions are good, facts are better – do not judge but help them judge – within clearly set boundaries – start personal – reflect with your team – find management support.'[105]Feeling over-worked and anxious about facing this particularly volatile class addressing such a sensitive issue, I took their help to heart.

Teunis was the first to come in, the smallest of the platoon, taking a seat near Anton, Aart, and Roelof, the largest of them all, in the tight fit of the cooped classroom Ruud and Alfred flanked their positions as usual. More sulkily than ever they take their seats behind the thousand-mile stare of Gerard's red-rimmed eyes revealing a somewhat troublesome digestion of his non-solid lunch, leaving the absent Jozef behind in the park. The slumped body of Lammert who started a morning nap as soon as he sat down, drooped over his desk, the inseparable and argumentative Sjoerd and Marinus together

up front, Abass sitting solitary in the back, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Despite having claimed their positions on the flanks of the masculine rock at the start of the school year, there was something wrong in the way the few girls in this class anxiously positioned themselves. The twins Jan and Bernardina sat next to each other with Ivo, who spent most of his weekends and evenings behind decks due to his growing success as a DJ. Yet he was a more loyal attendee of this class than many of his brothers in arms. Ivo was anxiously eyeing me, and I should have read the heads-up he gave, a clear warning sign of the battle to come.

Alfred: 'Are we gonna be silent sir?' – *talking helps* – Ruud: 'why should I be silent for you, dumbass?' Sjoerd: 'of course we'll be silent, won't we, Abbas?' Jozef, walking in dazedly: 'why aren't we silent for those attacks in Beirut?' – *provide information* – Marinus: 'cause we live in Holland, idiot, we need to defend our country.' Ivo: 'racist asshole.' Jan: 'those French flags on Facebook are hypocritical.' Sjoerd: 'why man, have you no respect?' – *emotions are good, facts are better* – Marinus: 'it's gonna happen here, then see how you feel.' Sjoerd: 'yeah Abbas, any plans?' Ivo: 'leave Ab' alone you fucking racist!' Dirkje: 'but it is always the Muslims, sir?' – *do not judge but help them judge* – Sjoerd: 'I'm gonna join the army, do something about it' – Herman, walking in late: 'oh no, not again, I'm outta here.' – *within clearly set boundaries* – Jan: 'yeah coward, leave when there's a war on!' Teunis: 'shut up man.' Bernardina: 'do we have to talk about this, sir?' Ruud: 'this class is full of racists, sir.' Sjoerd: 'what's wrong with defending our country?' – *start personal* – Teacher: 'this is how war starts lads…that's why we need to talk about it, it's what I am writing about in my book right now' – *reflect with your team* – Teacher: 'just had a tough lesson.' Colleague: 'really? Silent for a minute and then on with maths.' – *find management support* – Principal: 'I'm sure as a war literature scholar that was easy for you…'[106]

What was I to do with this unwilling 'fight-class'? I had encountered reluctance to my narratives of conflict before, when I put *The Diary of a Young Girl* on the extra-curricular program of a pre-selected group of high achieving Vwo-pupils. Yet their curricular confrontation with this canonical war narrative has shown that pupils reengage with literature when teachers involve them on two levels: by letting them contribute to a broader discourse vis-a-vis literature and the force fields, and by letting them create their personal testimonies of war. And so, the qualitative path I had chosen, as a scholar and teacher, as a literary historian and educational critic, has led me beyond

the remit of an English teacher, tackling a Dutch canonical narrative, exploring other genres, from First World War poetry to Second World War prose, and beyond the limits of my classroom from Ypres to the gates of Bergen-Belsen. This chapter will continue on the road less travelled, and build on my previous literary interventions, working towards a new design that would stand the test in this tumultuous class. For what was happening in this 'fight-class' was beyond reluctance; it was pure resistance. Given the very different nature of this group on both a pedagogical and didactic level, being more cognitively and culturally diverse, I was convinced the next step to engage this troubled Havo-class necessitated an even further travail from my comfort zone, into the realms of another war and another genre: Vietnam war movies.

This chapter will analyse the means by which to establish gateways between the effect the blurred boundaries between zones of war and peace were having on my pupils' lives, and the possibilities multimodal war narratives might give them to understanding the present. Standing on the shoulders of the previous interventions I have outlined in this book, using the power of 'pathos formula' narratives that teaching literature offered, I knew I could rely on literary tools to address the tensions the 'Paris-lesson' had uncovered. I needed to design the right literary intervention and choose the right gateway war narratives to facilitate a discussion relevant to this 'fight-class'' current predicament. As I will show in further detail in this chapter, adding Vietnam War movies to the educational curriculum serves various goals. Firstly, it lets pupils be introduced with a war and its dominant narrative which has hitherto been ignored, in Dutch education certainly, but also on a broader global scale. Secondly, by adding war movies to the curriculum I wish to open up traditional English curricula in the Netherlands and add visual literacy to the teaching goals, as well as open up possibilities for inter-disciplinary cooperation with other subjects at school. Thirdly, I will show that the average Havo-pupil's growing adversity to reading books will motivate them to engage with war movies on short notice. This genre and form will need less educational introduction than novels. War movies will serve as a relatively accessible gateway to address the more contentious topics of war in their day and age, and to bring some order to the chaos of this fight-class after the Paris attacks.

With no (educational) war anthologies like those on First World War poetry, or longstanding teaching tradition such as *The Diary* to draw from, this chapter will add to educational tradition by teaching war movies and its effects in the classroom. Of course,

other disciplines at school will have broached the use of visual aids including film in class, but not in the literary historical sense that this chapter will suggest. It is one of two important aspects to this chapter: to show what the outcome of putting Vietnam war movies on the Havo-curriculum is, and whether and in what way these movies have served the purpose I have set them above. Before I do so, however, the first step I will need to take for my own and my teacher-reader's benefit is to understand what was bothering this disruptive set of Havo-pupils; in what way education was failing them. This will require me to foreground my role as educational theorist in this chapter, as I delve deeper into the educational theories involving citizenship education. This is the second aspect to this chapter, clearly linking citizenship to literature education. It will make my reasoning behind my choice for Vietnam War movies more lucid to my teacher reader. By delving deeper into educational theory, I want to show the particular forces at play with this generation, and their broader social political context living in a climate of war (Hynes 1998).

4.1 Addressing the Sensitive Issues: Literature and Citizenship in the Classroom

Literature, as the previous chapters have shown, has long had a powerful link to teaching citizenship values, of shaping pupils' mores and morals, before and during the First World War as much as after the Second World War, when *The Diary of A Young Girl* was established as an important canonical educational gateway text to address the Holocaust. What follows is the question what war movies, as the 'natural form' to the Vietnam War according to Kate McLoughlin (2011), will yield in the classroom, besides a welcome multimodal genre shift?[107] It is a question this chapter will seek to answer, by taking the beautiful risk of education (Biesta 2013) via a wide variety of qualitative literary interventions in the classroom, and using the power of canonical 'pathos formula' literature: Vietnam War movies. This chapter will build upon and add to previous innovations to the curriculum such as 'Finding Anne Frank' and 'Adopt a War Poem,' intrinsic as they are to the 'exciting […] re-emergence of […] school-based curriculum development' (Biesta and Priestley (2013, 1). As I have argued throughout, the literary interventions in this book are building stones to this 'New Curriculum' (ibid.).

Yet as an English language teacher in the first place, the primary goals of my lessons are to teach them English. Foregrounding literature in my curricula to the effect

this book has hitherto shown, was I finally arriving at the core of what education is really for? It is this question which lies implicit in this book, and my continuing ambition to place literature central to language curricula. A curriculum, which purposefully chooses not to be 'driven by economic concerns' but rather, by 'wider human concerns such as concern for democracy, social and ecological justice and peaceful human coexistence' (Biesta and Priestley 2013, 233). 'The Paris attacks,' Biesta continues, 'once more show that this is where the true challenges of education lie,' and puts my rocky lesson after these attacks in a broader perspective.[108] I felt proud for having conquered an anxiety universal to teachers just a week earlier, taking pupils to a former Nazi concentration camp. The result was a task designed to enable pupils' ownership of and partnership with the force-fields as well as coming to terms with, reflecting on and creating their own testimony to the cultural memory of the Holocaust. It was a pride short-lived. The immediate reality of the world's events had 'rumbled on since those gagged days' (Sassoon 1983, 145). It was clearly having an immense effect on many of the pupils I was teaching that year. My troubled 'fight-class' in particular had forced me to address the war-torn present.

Delving into the archive of educational scholarship for help, a report commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education concludes that due to the way pupils grow up in their own peer groups any given class suffers from 'mental segregation' (Margalith Kleijwegt 2016). Pupils with different ideas sit side by side in class, Kleijwegt (2016) explains, but they can easily be each other's political and social opposites, harbouring a total lack of interest in each other. The tough teens I had taught that Monday were a case in point. Following from the conclusions in this report, the former Dutch Secretary of State for Education Jet Bussemaker argued that citizenship or 'civic schooling, should be the set primary mission of education.[109] Bussemaker's advice raised by the concerns in Kleijwegt's report is supported by 'Platform Education2032,' a commission designed to formulate a vision for Dutch education of the future. This is a precursor to Curriculum.nu, a group of teachers, teacher-leaders and educational theorists who, at the time of writing, have been given the task to roll out the Platform's benchmark and visionary advice foregrounding the vital importance of teaching citizenship values in primary and secondary schools.[110]

Narrowing down on the platform report, its extensive research amongst Dutch pupils is unique in its kind. The results are striking. Students argue for a curriculum with more 'freedom of choice,' one that includes elements of 'globalisation' and 'citizenship,'

on a 'personalised' level, leading to 'subjectification.' It is a curriculum that teaches them 'societal skills' and reflects on ('backgrounds' to) prevalent political and social 'developments' and 'topics.'[111] To top all this, pupils find it important to 'discover their talents and become socially skilled.' [112] All these aspects belong to a concept called '*Bildung*'; the 'cry of the land of poets and thinkers against the demands of credentialism, professionalism and careerism,' (Waters 2015, 4). A variety of definitions of '*Bildung*' apply, including 'self-cultivation,' 'personal and cultural maturation,' 'philosophy,' 'existentialism,' or significantly: plain 'education' (ibid.). At an individual level these properties are essential to citizenship education, and by and large absent from the 'Havo'-stream education my 'fight-class' enjoyed. An educational tier down from Vwo, there was no field trip (Bergen-Belsen/Ypres) or extensive literature course (First World War poetry) in curricular view. Rather, with a year of ploughing through English grammar and preparing for their reading exam ahead of them, it was no surprise that both their language and motivation levels were lower than their peers at Vwo.

And so, by rebelling as they did in my class, these pupils were implicitly pleading for '*Bildung*.' The Paris attacks and its ripple-effect in the classroom make clear that the appeal to education to formulate answers to crises and gain a certain control on calamity is urgent. This is why force-fields continue to press upon teachers to create fixed, value-driven anchors in education to developing pupil-citizenship, to channel societal turmoil and safeguard against the development of extremism. Issues of calamity and conflict are inextricably bound with pupils' current cry for integration of the mores of '*Bildung*' to educational curricula. Their reflection on the subject of war is both part of pupils' individual development as human beings and as citizens within a democratic society. The literary intervention at the core of my response in the classroom, therefore, needed to act as flywheel to address the 'mental-segregation' (Kleijwegt 2016) prevalent in my current Havo-class head on. This is why I chose the most direct visual confrontation with violence and conflict possible: war movies. Moreover, movies will prove a popular form of choice with pupils, especially with cognitively and culturally diverse Havo-classes. Because economic backgrounds differ just as widely, choosing film would get pupils as closely as they could to seeing a battlefield as their peers in Vwo, by which I mean to offer a low budget and broadly applicable educational literary intervention to my teacher-reader.

Concretely, this means the task I will outline in this chapter will not include any form of travelling to a so called 'site of memory and site of mourning' (Winter 1995), for

these require both an economic and time investment which not all pupils can afford. The visual realities of Vietnam war movies would have to replace that experience. This is why the scope of this book is purposefully wide, my qualitative, tentative and intuitive approach allowing my ambition to come to fruition, developing a much wider collection of multimodal literary interventions for my teacher-reader to pick and mix to their benefit than my previous lack of time and access to scholarship would have allowed. Designing another literary intervention from scratch, I welcomed the opportunity my qualitative analytic choice provided: true width. By now my teacher-reader will have gotten used to the three different roles I combine throughout. This chapter will analyse the history of Vietnam War movies (literary historian), its (lack of) influence in and on education (educational theorist) and its use in the 21st century classroom (teacher) as multimodal literary gateway (all three combined). Drawing from the lessons in previous chapters in my design of a new literary intervention, this chapter will aim to avoid the 'narrow view of citizenship' to which the force fields are particularly susceptible, pressing as they do on pupils' ability to simply 'recount and remember key historical, political, religious and cultural aspects of [American] society' (Hopkins 2014, 118). Doing so, it is vital to embed pupils' individual testimonies (Felman 1995), which are a form of prosthetic memory (Landsberg 2004), in a group process, especially in disrupted classes such as this 'fight-class.'

4.2 Engaging Teenagers: Introducing Vietnam War Movies

Back in the classroom, my lesson on the Paris attacks of 13 November 2015 with my 'Havo'-stream 'fight-class' filled with boisterous boys had been tumultuous to say the least. Yet as the buzzer sounded at noon to mark Europe's moment of silence, these boys, and the five girls in this class, did what was expected from them: they all remained silent. Judging from the national newspaper headlines the next day, this was more than I could say of pupils at other Dutch schools.[113] Most media focused on Islamic students disrupting lessons by shouting 'Allahu Akbar,' which in turn received outraged comments through social media aimed at these pupils but also their teachers. The problem in my class was the opposite, but not less problematic: had anyone taken to raising their voice, 'kick all Muslims out' would have been a more likely phrase. It was evidence of society's increased polarisation, most present on the Internet, and physically palpable in schools. And as the

buzzer sounded for the second time, this time signalling the end of class, I noticed a ripple of relief flow through the group, signifying more than just gladness to have got the dreaded hour over with: they had just survived a lesson on citizenship without it igniting into chaos. This English class, a pick and mix of social, political, ethnic and economic backgrounds, was taking its first steps towards something broader than English grammar: society's most sensitive issues were being addressed together in class.

Confronting pupils with this 'climate,' 'pathos formula' war narratives have proven to be powerful gateways within the war curricula I have previously outlined: 'fixed points' (J. Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 127) in time 'flashing backwards and forwards' (Johnson 2012) as 'temporal anchors' (Huyssen 1995) in the memory melee. Allowing space for pupils to create their own testimony, whether in the form of poetry (World War I), prose (World War II), or film (Vietnam) is effective on a variety of levels. Firstly, it allows pupils to involve and engage in a tangible way with the societal, academic, and political debate. Secondly, pupils' experiences and insights are brought into significance. What is more, pupils' reflections on and contributions to the cultural memory of war move beyond the boundaries of the topic of English as a foreign language, and thus invite cross-curricular teaching. Last, but not least, their testimonies are examples of citizenship education, framed through (war) literature, which reflects upon their daily lives and thus contributes to their individual '*Bildung*.' So much for theory, for when I introduce my literary plans to my 'fight-class,' they are not convinced at all, responding with a deflating: 'Oh no sir, please, what's the point of that?'[114]

It was essential for me to find a way to motivate these pupils. To make these lessons stick they had to become part of their '*Bildung*.' Though rocky, the Paris lesson's limited success had been their silence, a ray of light after the storm. A report commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education presents 'classroom dialogue' as an essential tool for future teachers to apply for future citizenship lessons.[115] The 'Paris' lesson had at least shown that 'confrontation with uncomfortable truths is the first and crucial step' (Kleijwegt 2016). It was an element to the lesson I needed to take with me in my design of the Vietnam war movie curriculum. Looking back, I had triggered such dialogue in the Vwo-classes on the downing of flight MH17 by juxtaposing Sassoon's and Van Amerongen's poems, the way that travelling to Bergen-Belsen to find the ending to a child's narrative had won over the hearts and minds of my extra-curricular group a year later. Motivating a (pre-selected) group of (high achieving) Vwo-students was one thing,

captivating an average and difficult Havo-class quite another. My hunch was that putting war movies on the curriculum of difficult classes would engage these rebellious pupils, for this was a medium close to their hearts: movies were part of their daily lives. And so, I set out to design a task-based war movie exercise, which would develop their language skills and cultural literary history in an engaging, motivating and personalised way, thus achieving its fly-wheel effect: citizenship through *Bildung*.

Put in a broader context of society today, my pupils' primary reaction is no surprise. There is a prevalent climate in education to measure everything according to yield, something which this chapter and this book seeks to counter. Tests and marks win significant ground over creativity, *Bildung* and citizenship. 'Culture and educational policy makers are inclined to give technocratic and economic priorities their approval,' Van Iseghem confirms (2015, 43). Doing so, they openly question 'the benefits of literature and its use in education.' Dutch youngsters find the 'legitimisation of literature education particularly important,' Theo Witte (quoted in Van Iseghem 2015, 42) argues. Though Witte and Van Iseghem argue with reference to the use of literature in Dutch language classes at secondary schools, there are equal arguments to 'integrate and strengthen literature in foreign language education' in the Netherlands (Van der Knaap 2015, 209). Defining the use of literature in school and society as a whole is more important than ever, to which this chapter seeks to contribute. For besides its communicative, linguistic and 'aesthetic' value, literature 'offers knowledge of a country and its people, is suitable for intercultural education, and is an important source of intellectual, emotional and moral development,' aspects that are integral to citizenship and *Bildung* (Van der Knaap 2015, 211). These qualities are hard to measure economically. Yet they are vital to democracy and reverberate throughout the variety of multimodal war literature interventions I outline in this book.

The fight-class pupils are part of the post-9-11 generation, raised to expect a violent world. 'Twentieth-century wars systemised attacks on civilians, including children,' Trumpener (2016) argues, and the September 11 attacks at the dawn of the 21st-century were a dark foreboding of the ever-shifting battlefields of war. For the millennial generation, '9/11 is their equivalent of Pearl Harbor' (Fairbanks 2011), catalyst to perpetual global violence. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan dragged on right into the second decade of the young century, spiralling into the Syrian war and terror attacks in Europe, affecting both the Millennial generation and the next, Generation Z. This is the

generation my 'fight-class' pupils (and all the students in this book) belonged to; they are described as an 'ethnically diverse' generation which is both 'progressive' and 'pro-government.'[116] Time would tell whether terror attacks such as MH17 and 'Paris' would become Generation Z's very own 9-11. These attacks brought war to an unsettling geographical proximity to my students, 'a kind of warfare where the notion of separation between combatants and civilians' is overturned (Goodenough and Immel 2008). Drawing conclusions from previous literary interventions, it is the 'ur-terror' (Segal 2008) of Owen's gas-attack in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and the imbedded terror of *The Diary*, which continue to draw pupil readers to war narratives. This is why I hoped to truly shock and awe my unwilling fight-class pupils by showing them canonical war movies such as *Platoon* (1986) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), bound to be rife with 'ur-terror.'

Teenagers are treated too tenderly, especially in a world that is riven with terror attacks and refugees fleeing from conflict, invading pupils' relative zones of safety. In fact, some of the first children on the run from the war in Syria were claiming their seats in my classroom. Defending the Dutch National children's literature week's thematic choice for stories involving horror, children's literature author Rian Visser (2017) stresses the need for narratives that reflect the bleak and gruesome side of life. This helped explain why the booklist I had given my 'fight-class' earlier that year was very unpopular. There were two sides to the problem: content and form. Both stemming from the dominance of the screen in their lives, the non-violent prose literature on their curricula was too much of a contrast with their lives on social media, as Netflix subscribers, as pupils of the visual Generation Z. These teenagers are 'digital natives' on course to become the 'most well educated generation yet,' yet with 'little or no memory of the world as it existed before smartphones.'[117] The Paris attacks, the downing of MH17, IS decapitations and terror attacks wreaking havoc in cities in Europe: the content of their TV and mobile phone screens brought them every day was increasingly violent. My guess was that the violence in Vietnam War movies, though different in nature and setting, would nevertheless reverberate in form and content with what my students were used to.

This violent backdrop to my pupils' everyday lives has increased the mental and physical proximity of war. What is important to my teacher-reader is that this chapter argues that teachers might benefit greatly by seeking out connections to 21st-century's visual realities, in a bid to teach with the greatest possible relevance for today's students. Young learners are 'continually connected to global crises,' Einhaus and Pennell (2014,

35) argue. They 'are visual learners, in many respects, and respond better to the accessibility and familiarity of visual sources rather than the printed or spoken word' (Einhaus and Pennell 2014, 43). Yet these two scholars showed 'an overwhelming dominance of poetry analysis as the main context for teaching about First World War writing' and 'conflict writing' as a broader genre.[118] Its relatively short form forces a powerful message, distilled to maximum strength, is ideally suited for the similarly limited yet potentially powerful islands of classroom time-on-task.[119] It goes to show that war poetry was not losing the territory Jon Stallworthy bitterly claimed it had lost to war prose.[120] However, what is important here is that outside the boundaries of education's walls, the 'Word,' quoting Stallworthy, was increasingly losing ground to the 'Image,' a battle that was given a deciding blow on the eve of the Internet revolution.[121]

More reason to opt for war movies as narrative of choice for the task at hand, 'natural form' to the Vietnam War quoting McLoughlin (2011), who argues that each war brings a change of narrative with it, its own staple form. 'Too many schoolchildren (and too many teachers) need to be reminded how warfare [has] changed since 1918,' Jon Stallworthy argues (2014, xxxv). His concern is that both pupils and their educators need to consider what Nick Mansfield (2006, 4) defines as a 'truism: each war redefines the nature of war itself, due to changes in arms technology, military organisation or geo-strategic history.' I have shown that these changes have led to an incremental increase in civilian witnesses and victims of war and have thus given way to a broadened scope of war narratives. Pupils and educators need not so much consider the changed nature of warfare, as Stallworthy and Mansfield point out, but that this change has, importantly, caused a shift in narratives considered as authentic and as such appeal most to student audiences, as well as a shift in form: from poetry to movies.

During my design of previous literary interventions and their effect in the classroom, Kate McLoughlin's (2011) tropes of war proved a great asset to understanding the workings of teaching war literature. Her theories applied in education have uncovered that war narratives' 'autopsy' is a crucial ingredient to establishing 'credentials' with its pupil audience. The more violent a soldier's narrative is, the more autopsy it has, students argue. The same goes for 'details' of war (McLoughlin 2011). The more details of war *The Diary* revealed, the more credible it became to its teenage readers. In both cases, the more credible the story the more popular it is with teenage readers, though of course it remains open to discussion whether these war narratives are truly authentic. The visual details of

a long-gone war, the brutality of a battle halfway across the globe dished up to my pupils in the comfort of their Dutch classroom, how would pupils judge their films' authenticity?

McLoughlin's theory has been enlightening so far, and merits further use in this chapter researching war movies in the classroom. Yet I am aware that up till now, my use of her theory is somewhat haphazard. Begging my teacher-reader's patience, time-pressed as I am to research, design and apply a broad width of literary interventions, this will remain so for now. However, for the benefit of all, I will present a more structured and detailed use of her tropes of war, peeling their merits off one by one in relation to their use in the classroom in the next chapter of this book. For now, it is time to start introducing and applying my intervention, a work in progress, to my class. I will do so in emulation of the way I have presented my literary interventions to my reader previously. For clarity's sake it is important to realise, however, that the difference is, that the interventions in this chapter are parts of a larger whole. Task-based learning theory speaks of the Willis approach: three so-called phases: 'Pre-task,' raising consciousness activities, 'during-task' and 'post-task,' reflective and focussed communication activities (Ellis, Skehan, Natsuko, Li and Lambert 2020, 365). Thus, instead of separately applicable tasks such as the five World War I poetry tasks of chapter two, or the split between in and outside interventions when applying *The Diary* in chapter three, the Vietnam war movie intervention is presented here as one whole task in three separate parts.

Intervention Part I: Introducing Images of War in Class

'If Vietnam was the first TV-war, then ladies and gentlemen, we are in the middle of an App-war…' My boisterous boys and anxious girls stopped talking, many putting away their mobile phones hastily, thinking a sudden declaration of war had been aimed at their most treasured possessions. It was some time after their 'Paris lesson,' and the declamatory opening announcement of a newly developed curriculum, both embedded within my research domain as a scholar and reflective of the times of turmoil invading teachers' everyday classrooms had them quiet and all ears. 'The television,' I said, battling on and aided by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore (1968, 134), 'along with the computer […] has altered every phase of the American vision and identity.' Exactly half a century after the revolutionary 1960s I was looking at the children of the Internet revolution, McLuhan and Fiore's words seemed equally fitting to the cell phone generation in front of me. 'Indeed, we are now in the midst of our first [Internet] war,' I

continued, paraphrasing McLuhan and Fiore, 'the way the teenagers of the 60s were in the midst of their first "television war"' (ibid.). So far so good, no fights or insults and nobody had walked out: all was quiet on this fight-class's front. 'And this is why,' I concluded tentatively, 'in order to reflect more fully on the times we live in today we will focus on 1960s American cultural revolution, paying special attention to the role of Vietnam war literature…'

A loud groan was let forth and protest from one of the lads, *'Oh, no sir, please. What's the point of that?'*[122] Yet considering all that had been said and shouted during the Paris lesson, and fought out during the ordinary hours of English grammar, then, notwithstanding this outcry, my so-called 'fight-class' was all docility now. Still, I wanted every individual in the group in on this war, and therefore I continued my battle. 'Because' I explained, 'there are many comparisons that can be drawn between the troubled times you live in and those of the revolutionary 1960s.' Exactly half a century ago, 'the living room was the space in which household members would cluster around the television and *be* an audience,' explains Andrew Hoskins (2004, 13; italics in original), 'in the highly routinized times of news programmes' that were filled with footage from the Vietnam War. Besides war invading their homes, the fifty-year commemorations of World War I and the ensuing war poetry anthology boom had simultaneously started to punctuate pupils' daily rhythm at school. Poets such as Owen and Sassoon and their visceral battlefield poetry, portraying the cataclysmic start to their century, struck a chord with the teenagers of the '60s. They had been raised by a generation scarred by the Second World War yet silent about it and were now confronted with the incredible loudness of war on two fronts: their grandparents' war at school and their own war on TV.

The 1960s generation protested loudly against the wars that pervaded their existence, because 'war insists on drowning out all other noise', writes McLoughlin, 'deafening peacetime discourses, demanding complete attention' (2011, 23). For these students, at the medial meeting point of the 20th century wars, either televised, in poetry or stooped in scarred silence, they were at a vital crossroads of their bloody century. Confronted with the 'endinglessness' (McLoughlin 2011, 107) of war, many teenagers rebelled. Thus Jeffrey Walsh (2009, 227) argues, 'Vietnam [became] associated with box-office cinema, anti-war songs, the Civil Rights movement, West Coast rock, pop-art posters, political protest theater [and] artistic photography.' At the same time many teenagers were drafted into the United States army, 'mostly as nineteen-year-olds,' fresh

from high school (ibid.). They entered into a war 'involving attrition and bloody stalemate,' Walsh (2009, 226-7) explains, 'with few clear-cut victories, endless wrangling over prisoners of war, and a singularly futile ending' which was a far cry from the 'morally justifiable fight to defeat fascism and genocide in the Second World War.' The fate of Vietnam soldiers struck more of a chord with their grandfathers' plight and the poetry that flowed from their trenches, than their fathers' fight and silent legacy.

Television changed the 1960s society in that it enabled the Vietnam war to be 'fought in the American home as much as in Vietnam,' which 'can be illustrated by noting some of the favourite music, painting, and literature of the young teen-agers of their time, for nearly all of whom this war and all wars are anathema' (McLuhan and Fiore 1968, 135). In much the same way, the rich variety of (social) media Apps constantly feed my pupils with live and breaking news, turning the classroom into a live audience of war. Phones are more individual and intrusive in comparison to '60s TV experience, which was physically bound to the proximity of a television set or cinema screen, as well as set times each day instead of 24/7, and as such it was a shared and social event. In contrast, the place pupils share their news feeds is increasingly localised in the non-physical reality of the virtual Internet itself, such as their Facebook feeds or Instagram pages, making it a much more singular as well as perpetual experience. However, the one tangible physical location they do share their phone driven media experience is in the classroom, where they meet their 'virtual' peers on a daily basis. Thus, schools become the site where the main action of modern warfare is brought to the screen(s) and fought out, which sheds some light on the sudden flaring of tensions in my fight-class earlier that year.[123]

'I'm gonna join the army, do something about it' my pupil Sjoerd had vowed during the 'Paris lesson.'[124] As Dutch jet-fighters continued to scramble from their base in the Middle East to drop their bombs on IS targets, Sjoerd was not alone in his resolve, marking perhaps the biggest difference between teenagers of the '60s and those I was presently teaching, for whom war was not an 'anathema' (McLuhan and Fiore 1968, 134). Rather, my pupils regarded war as a given fact, part of their daily lives and not something to dislike or like; unlike the 1960s generation, they had not grown up in a 'counterculture of rebellion that supplied glamorous slogans and images' (Walsh 2009, 227). Research in the United States shows that relatively few of the millennial generation choose an army career.[125] Yet '9/11 fuelled a deep and abiding sense of patriotism in many young people' (Fairbanks 2011). Whereas 'politically, millennials lean left and are recognized for their

tolerance,' the post-9-11 millennial generation, the Generation Z to which all the pupils in this book belong, 'could become strongly nationalistic if provoked' (Wagaman 2016). This makes them 'similar to the "G.I. generation" that came of age during the Great Depression and World War I' (Wagaman 2016). For many of my Dutch pupils, the perpetual attacks by IS on European cities fuelled a mounting wish, especially since the rocket attack on flight 'MH17.' Thus 'provoked,' Generation Z boys like Sjoerd actively welcome an army career.

Television has an incredible power as a nation-building machine. It has 'helped reproduce an illusion of mass – in advertising and marketing, in ways-to-bring-up-your-children' (Hoskins 2004, 13). 'Citizenship,' Marita Sturken (1997, 14) explains, 'could thus be enacted through live television.' Whenever British, Dutch, or American audiences 'watch events of "national" importance,' she continues, 'they perceive themselves to be part of a national audience regardless of their individual political views or cultural background' (Sturken 1997, 13-14). Broadcasts on TV act as a reminder 'that "we" live in nations, "our" identity is constantly being flagged' (Billig 2017, xxv), just like it is when reading poetry on a Scottish battlefield. At the same time, 'television's re-enactment' is 'much closer to the fluid ways in which memory operates not as a stable force but as a constantly rewritten script' (Sturken 2002, 200, cited in Hoskins 2004, 13). This is 'renarrativization' as Sturken defines it, telling the story of war over and over again, 'a constant rescripting, […] retelling the past' (Sturken 1997, 42-3). It is 'essential in memory; indeed it is its defining quality' (ibid.). This past is under continual influence of a variety of force fields, seeking to influence memory: politics, academia and society. The Vietnam movies that appeared during and after the war have since retold and reframed the memory of that war.

I have shown in the previous chapter how teachers' curricula contribute to pupils forming a memory of war which they cannot and did not have before they tackled war narratives. These stories are powerful 'pathos formulas' that thus bridge time and space, signalling a new memory of the past, forming in pupils' so-called 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg 2004). The problem is, that memory is under huge contestation during conflict or its commemoration, as 'Goveadder' has shown. The question that surfaces, is what pupils remember and carry into the future when they read combat poetry of the First or memoirs of the Second World War. And the Vietnam War is no exception. It is an event 'through which the concept of the nation has most powerfully been called into

question,' Sturken (1997, 14) argues, and nowhere more so than through the film narratives representing that conflict. Like all war narratives, Vietnam War movies represent the 'living memory of the changing same, [which] direct the consciousness of the group back to its significant nodal points' in their collective cultural memory (Gilroy 1993, 198). As such, they are malleable through their dialogue with the present. It is up to my pupils to pinpoint the ways in which the film narratives of the Vietnam War continue to be influenced, and to decide for themselves in what ways these visual re-writings of war shed light on the troubled times they live in today.

Back in the classroom, I say as much to my Havo-pupils. Critics argue, I explain, that the narratives of the Vietnam War provide 'prescient comment on America's subsequent military engagements, such as her lengthening involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan' (Walsh 2009, 237). "And to these I would add the battlefields of Syria," I declare challengingly, "the consequences of which are spilling over into the European streets of your daily lives, in the form of refugees and terror attacks like in Paris, and to which you have daily and unremitting access through your mobile devices." Combat movies ask 'eternal questions', and 'most of them are basic to our understanding of ourselves and our history' (Basinger 2006, 179). Seeking both what 'eternal questions' the Vietnam War film might ask and the individual answers my pupils might provide will help reflect on their daily war-infused lives. "This," I continue, "pretty much sums up the reasons why we will start watching and analysing Vietnam War movies at home and during class," I conclude my opening speech carefully. At once a terrible noise broke out, not of verbal or physical fights, but of cheering. As soon as it had become clear to the class that they were to analyse visual narratives rather than textual, high-fives and sighs of relief rippled through the classroom. 'So can we watch Rambo sir, and get a mark for that?' Lammert asked, awake for the first time that year, turning his sleepy head in disbelief. 'Netflix chill!' the boys shout in unison, the girls shaking their heads wearily.[126]

'Few art forms […] continue to be utilized more often to depict warfare than cinema', Daniel Binns (2017, 3) claims, and as far as the Vietnam War is concerned, I had made a popular choice of genre with my pupils. But there was more at hand than just my war movie choice that struck such a chord. The success of any (extra) curricular (literary) project rested on a variety of important pedagogical and didactic educational pillars, which I had to establish from the outset. Defining the rules of successful classroom engagement, the former chapters have underscored the importance of establishing ways

of involving the students, both critically and creatively. Allowing pupils to seriously engage with the specific scientific, societal or academic debates that revolve around the war literature at the core of the course is essential. Teachers guide them through the no-man's land, but eventually every pupil's fight, though shoulder-to-shoulder, will lead to their own creative individual engagement. To be able to achieve such loosening of the didactic reins, keeping them pedagogically tight is vital: watching Vietnam films was by no means the 'Netflix-chill' they had hoped for. Pupils need to trust the teacher to lead by example: sticking to any agreements, taking pupils seriously by involving them in the force field's debate and allowing structured critique on the course content as we went along. Also, by engaging with them personally, by showing you care as a teacher; and clearly establish the end goals, marking and evaluation of the curriculum by communicating this in a timely fashion.

Ironically, the Paris lesson that had felt so rocky had been a turning point in this class. Veering off from the set English grammar curriculum and engaging with the warring realities of the present, I had finally touched upon the raw nerve of this class in which the boisterous energy of the boys had sometimes flared up into outright aggression. This lesson on the terror attacks had proven the gateway to address the individual issues that my pupils were dealing with as future citizens. Though their individual sensitivities were often expressed in a more than colourful way, engagement with them as a teacher had paradoxically tightened my control on the group, thus establishing the most important pedagogical parameters of all: pupils had started to feel safe, they were being seen and taken seriously. With this hurdle taken, it was easier to engage them with the literature task ahead. Didactically, they accepted continuing a dialogue on war, even though Paris was a long temporal and spatial shot away from Saigon. I told my pupils they could choose a Vietnam movie to watch from an IMDB-list I had designed for this project. Expecting a visceral thrill, they were happy to engage.[127]

Intervention Part II: Critical Engagement with Vietnam War Movies

In order to adhere to my own dictum of 'safe-seen-serious' pupils in the classroom, I started by engaging my students critically with recent scholarly insights into the genre of war movies, 'the most important vehicle for projecting the meaning of war as a struggle of Good against Evil' since World War II, Jay Winter claims (1999, 442). War movies, I explain to my class, are part of a 'grand narrative,' and 'frequently feature heroes that

overcome insurmountable odds, who help each other, and who have time to reflect on the futility of war and the righteousness of their own side.'[128] Vietnam War films thus either adhere to or diverge from the so-called 'grand narrative,' which can be interpreted as 'the ur-text of Hollywood war cinema' (Binns 2017, 13-14). Concretely, such 'grand narrative' war films are characterized by a set of components summarised to great acclaim by Jeanine Basinger. These have resulted in a 'list of elements […] which repeat and recur in the combat genre,' Basinger (2006, 175) explains, and it is that list which I present to my spellbound class on the blackboard. Basing her argument on the World War II combat film *Bataan*, Basinger extricates a list of war movie components that are universal to war movies.

I want my pupils to engage critically with Basinger's tropes, which have become the yardstick for all combat war movies. From these Daniel Binns (2017, 11) foregrounds 'a key group with a democratic ethnic mix, an objective, group conflicts, a faceless enemy, and death,' as key elements that emerge from Basinger's analysis. Given my previous research, I would add to these the importance of establishing 'credibility' and the presence of a messenger or 'parrhestiastes', in McLoughlin's terms, in the form of a journalist or writer.[129] I want my pupils to engage critically with the universal war movie characteristics as foregrounded by Binns and myself from Basinger's list in relation to the Vietnam War movie of their choice and establish to what extent their film adhered to them. Basinger, however, indicates another, non-cognitive effect of watching war movies which could be deemed to be of interest to a classroom situation. 'The audience is ennobled for having shared their combat experience, as they are ennobled for having undergone it', Basinger (2006, 177) explains. Thus, I intended to engage my pupils both cognitively and emotionally and examine to what effect watching Vietnam movies would have on my class.

In other words, watching the war film equals suffering the war trauma which, having undergone it by viewing it, purifies and elevates. Thus 'writing about war can […] function as a catharsis,' McLoughlin (2014, 31) argues. Whether viewing their Vietnam War movie of choice at home would have a similar effect on my pupils remained to be seen, but it does underscore the visceral nature of the genre and highlights the necessity to stop 'pussyfoot[ing] around the ur-terrors' (Segal 2008, 94), and confront children with them. Given the fact that the majority of canonical Vietnam War films have been rated appropriate viewing for audiences of 15 or 16 years and older, children have always been

an important part of the target audience of war's filmic narrative.[130] It could even be argued that targeting teenage viewers is done with a recruiting effect in mind, which is a possible and somewhat unexpected side effect of so-called anti-war movies I will return to later on. Most canonical war films are given similar age ratings, Holocaust movies such as *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Son of Saul* (2015) as well as recent (Iraq) war movies *The Hurt Locker* (2008) and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012).[131] It means all the pupils in my class are allowed to view these films, their ages ranging between 16 and 19 years, which is average to Havo 5.

Many of my students are at an age where they are eligible to join the army (18+). It is, therefore, no surprise that war films thus include teenagers in their scope. Since the 1960s pupils have been diligently reading and processing the harsh realities of 'hurt' in World War I combat poetry within schools' safely sanctioned walls. Over time, these graphic adult realities of war have also shifted into the realm of children's war literature. 'If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in,' argued Friedrich Nietzsche. 'Only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory' (1967, 61). By now, I was adding war movies to the widening scope of war narratives applicable in an educational setting, which had the power to 'hurt' and 'burn' in the memory of my pupils. So far, the testimonies to the performative scars freshly 'burned' in my pupils' memory are the Ypres poetry they had written and Bergen-Belsen film they had created. I had set a different testimonial task to this Havo 5 class: 'directing scenes of war.' I was asking them to pinpoint a number of key-scenes from their war movie and by applying film-theory directing the way they were convinced their classmates should view 'their' film. 'It is often through re-enactment that healing takes place,' Sturken (1997, 43) argues. This process would show to what extent my fight-class pupils' viewing, analysing and teaching of a Vietnam War movie would effectuate similar testimonial scarring; to what extent might these films 'heal?'

The prominence of the Vietnam War genre within the canon of war films leads to the suspicion that American citizens to have gone through a collective 'catharsis' of this trauma, and to have well and truly healed from it. The Vietnam War taught the United States a 'traumatic lesson in the new realities of warfare' (Walsh 2009, 236). Despite United States' technological superiority and their presumed moral high ground giving them the ostensive upper hand, Walsh explains:

> US military theorists remained fixated on conventional war as fought on the battlefields of Europe, and its politicians too often ignored low troop morale and motivation. […] The American public, after an initial period of enthusiasm, soon grew disillusioned, and the US soldiers found it increasingly difficult to believe in the causes they were supposedly fighting for. (ibid.)

The result was the appearance of 'pathos formula' war narratives such as *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), and a decade earlier, *Apocalypse Now*. The previous chapter has shown how Great War poetry of the likes of Sassoon and Owen, together with Anne Frank's Diary, was firmly embedded in education during the '60s, enabling it to serve as a moral paradigm in the protest against the Vietnam War. Replace 'US' and 'American' by 'UK' and 'British' in Walsh' statement above, and it would be uncritically accepted as a text on the First World War, which does indeed highlight the parallels between the two wars and their reception in popular culture. The point here, for my teacher-reader, is that comparisons to historical and contemporary culture are vital to these literary interventions, and when time allows, offer opportunities for inter-disciplinary cooperation between English and subjects such as history.

The morale of the British people during World War I, however, never grew low enough, despite the unprecedented loss of life. Combat poems drenched with the realities of battle published during the war were few, and despite Sassoon's infamous protest against the continuation of the war, read out loud in the House of Commons and published in *The Times* the following day, support for the war remained high. Had 'Passchendaele' been televised like the battles of Vietnam were half a century later, then this might well have effectuated a considerably lower public moral. Vice versa, the '60s generation, watching live televised war for the first time in history, could now start to paint a mental picture of war. It filled in the void left by their parents' silent generation, and for the first time provided a possible proxy-backdrop for the combat poets of the Great War they were now being introduced to at school, and thus proved prescient comment on the nature of war and its proceedings. War often has a delayed effect on its cultural output, and in the absence of narratives from Vietnam's combatants, Sassoon and Owen's voices of autopsy acted as temporary belligerent ventriloquists until Vietnam's veterans found their 'combat gnostic' (Campbell 1999) voice.

The biggest problem with the Vietnam War was, that unlike World War I and II, the United States lost this war. It may be considered as the primary reason why wide scope of war movies from that war, which spans over four decades, has not had the 'cathartic' effect. The scar is still healing, because the 'codes and conventions of the war movie genre were found inadequate to the task of describing the experience of losing a war' (Westwell 2006, 57). In other words, the Vietnam War 'disrupt[s] master narratives, those of American imperialism, technology, science, and masculinity' (Sturken 1997, 16). At first this caused Hollywood to simply ignore the war in Vietnam. Vietnam film *The Green Berets* (1968) was a notable exception. Regarded as the earliest Vietnam War movie, it starred and was directed by all-American hero John Wayne, and still adhered strongly to Basinger's traditional rules of engagement. Ultimately, however, the conventional ways of portraying war did not fit with the realities of Vietnam. So-called grand narratives do not allow for defeat and therefore, the Vietnam War demanded a 'radically different kind of sense-making' (Walsh 2009, 230). Back in the classroom, it was time for my pupils to start making sense of their choice in Vietnam War movies.

I felt pupils needed to be taught how to reflect critically on their film choice and any academic, social or political debate about it and Vietnam War films in general. Having named my intervention in the classroom 'directing scenes of war,' it involved pinpointing a number of key-scenes from their war movie of choice. Highlighting these, I hoped pupils would take the director's seat, as it were, and convey their birds-eye view of this hitherto widely ignored genre in education. I felt pupils needed to be taught how to reflect critically on their film choice and any academic, social or political debate about it and Vietnam War films in general. Movies are complex verbal and visual texts; therefore, my goal was for them to become visually literate. In order to achieve this, they needed to acquire a certain film-vocabulary and basic film-viewing techniques. For this purpose, I designed a concise classroom handbook for viewing, writing and presenting about film. Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Tim Corrigan, I aimed to aid my pupils 'through the process of converting the fun and pleasure of watching a movie into the satisfaction of articulating ideas about them' (Corrigan 2012, xi). Although Vietnam movies were beyond the remit of an English teacher, enhancing their vocabulary and getting them to write and to present in English was not, thereby keeping within range of the language-based targets of the Dutch central exams they would take later that year.[132]

In this sense, all the tasks I have designed and analysed in this book are double-, maybe even triple-edged swords: (visual) literature education as a way to enhance language skills and as a pathway to lessons on citizenship, both of which are vital steps within pupils' individual *Bildung*. Since introducing the troubled 'fight-class' I taught that year to the visual narratives of Vietnam, many others have followed in their footsteps. From this experience comes a clear view of pupils' popular choices, as well as students' reflections on their film choice and theory combined. I will divulge a range of observations in further detail below, yet the wide scope of my research simultaneously necessitates brevity. I stimulated pupils to form pairs or groups of three, hoping this would win enough classroom time to allow their presentations to evolve and develop the characteristics and depth of miniature lessons. Thus I allowed more room for creativity and left enough time for theoretical reflection; they would show their favourite scenes, explaining their technical quality to the class. Working together would be pedagogically rewarding; watching the movie as a social exercise, as well as didactically stimulating; two or three pairs of eyes seeing more than one I envisaged heated discussions on content and theory.

The next step was to involve them, their film and their scenes of choice in the current academic debate. In order to achieve this, I wanted them to focus in particular on Jeanine Basinger's acclaimed 'list of elements' and measure to what extent these do or do not 'repeat and recur' in their selected Vietnam combat movie (Basinger 2006, 75). In this way they might establish whether their films diverged from, or adhered to, Binns's 'grand narrative' of war movies, and doing so would allow them to position themselves, both in relation to their classmates' film analyses and within the current debate. Binns is amongst those scholars who claim that Hollywood's combat movies have 'most recent[ly] return[ed] to the grand narrative,' a development which, he writes, 'is all the more intriguing, given the fragmented and globital nature of modern warfare' (Binns 2017, 5). In my view, this development is especially 'intriguing' with regard to the pervasiveness of war in my Generation Z pupils' post–9-11 lives, especially because 'the grand narrative can be both a representation of former glory, and a powerful inspiration for or justification of future engagements' (ibid.). Becoming familiar with film theory and skilled in applying it to their war movie would make pupils understand current wars and how war narratives might inspire or justify them.

Thus, engaged in the subject matter I welcomed their combined intellect to dissent from and discuss the Basinger theory. All the while I was also aiming to target their

discussions on Vietnam's narrative representations of war to a broader one, on the conflicts that mark their lives today and their reactions to them. Binns is weary of the 'connection between politics, Hollywood, and memory' (ibid.), which makes the pupils' analytical process all the more significant. 'Recent Hollywood war films have revived a view of warfare as, if not glorious, then at least essential,' Binns argues (ibid.). At the same time Generation Z is particularly susceptible to see war as a necessary evil. They are not signing up in droves, but 'if provoked' they will join up and fight (Wagaman 2016). This generation more than any other since the 'G.I. generation' of World War II, are respectful of their parents and accept institutional authority. Thus, the government-driven call for school instituted education on citizenship and value-driven education is a call made on fruitful teenage ears. Yet with post-9-11 Vietnam films such as *We Were Soldiers* reframing old wars and returning to the 'grand narrative,' the question is what effect this latest 'renarrativization' of the Vietnam War has on their civic values as well as this generation's understanding of what warfare and (all) battle is like.

There is another important aspect to the process of 're-telling the past' (Sturken 1997, 42) in (Vietnam) war movies. It is the idea that a war movie can justify war or oppose it. More specifically, a film about a former war (Vietnam) can inspire the support for a new war (on Terror) or oppose it. This would imply war narratives show certain universal commonalities common to all wars. Kate McLoughlin supports this claim, arguing that there is a 'common ground between conflicts separated by thousands of years' (McLoughlin 2011, 15). 'Conveying these elements' through war narratives, McLoughlin explains, 'comprises a shared set of challenges,' which has resulted in strong resemblances between the war narratives of the 20th and 21st centuries. It is an important reason why these narratives have always played a central role in education, from epic Homer to sonneteering Sassoon. Yet moving beyond Anne Frank and World War II to the Vietnam War and beyond, teachers aspiring to embed narratives from this war will find no pre-existing teaching tradition. The fall of Saigon seemed as much news to [students]as the fall of Troy, and rather less welcome' Stallworthy comments wryly on teaching American students at the turn of the century (2001, vii). Their 'inability to reconcile myths of national virtue with the history of the conflict' has led to a near denial of its narrative existence (Walsh 2009, 229).

This educational lacuna starkly contrasts with the blockbuster status and Oscar-winning critical attention the Vietnam War has garnered from Hollywood. Given my

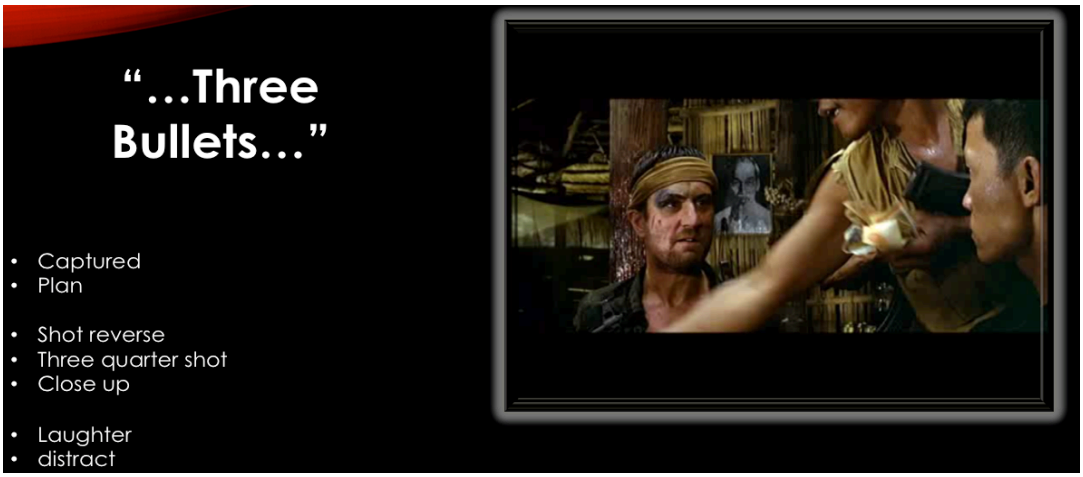
pupils' enthusiasm to engage with Vietnam War movies, it begs the question whether Stallworthy should have considered putting these on his students' curriculum. During the conflict, 'just one major film about the war appeared in cinemas,' Andrew J. Huebner (2008, 241) writes, a 'commercially successful yet critically panned apologia for the war:' Basinger-proof *The Green Berets* (1968). Though it has been widely argued that 'Vietnam-related or -inspired themes coursed through' many 1970s films, it wasn't until 'after the fall of Saigon in 1975,' Huebner argues, 'that Hollywood pictures interpreted the war directly' (ibid.). Guy Westwell (2006, 62) discerns three Vietnam War movie cycles. In 'generic terms,' this first cycle of the late '70s was 'strange, rambling and inchoate,' and includes films such as *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Apocalypse Now*. Their commercial success 're-establish[ed] the viability of the war movie,' and paved the way for what Westwell calls the commercially unrivalled '*Rambo* cycle,' of the early '80s, reframing the Vietnam War as a worthy purpose, reinstating the veteran as both 'hero and victim' (Westwell 2006, 63, 76-77). The third cycle of the late '80s and early '90s resisted this development, with films such as *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*, movies devoted to 'a powerful realist effect,' while making 'forceful claims to authentic experience' (Westwell 2006, 77). Notwithstanding a contentious fourth cycle of 'renarrativized' Hollywood war movies, produced post-9-11, these movies form the heart of the canon.

What is significant for my pupils and the film task I developed for them, is that all three cycles depend on 'the Vietnam veteran as the focal point for negotiating the experience and the memory of the war' (ibid.). Despite the extensive list on offer, students' film-task choices remained firmly within the realm of the canon.[133] This was understandable, given their relatively easy availability, and their accredited status on sites such as IMDB, both of which aspects effectuate a limiting of the canon, even though as a teacher of English I was widening the canon. What is important is that these war movies 'constructed' the Vietnam War in such a way that it was 'registered primarily through the experience of the veteran' (Westwell 2006, 57). Hollywood, having learned its lessons from the popularity of World War I's soldier poets, applies the fictional power of soldiers' own stories as its perspective. Audiences are thus seduced to believe their 'autopsy,' which explains their success at the box-office, and Vietnam War movie director Oliver Stone's own experience in that war was foregrounded to enhance this effect. There can be no claim to authenticity similar to the War Poets, yet I wondered if my pupils would notice the difference.

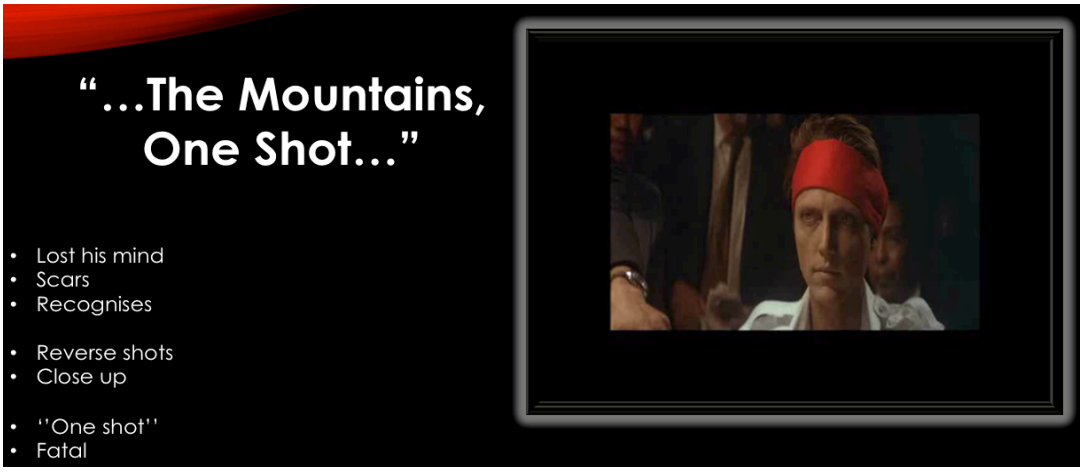
One of the most striking aspects I take away from the experience of putting Vietnam war movies on the curricula of my 'fight class' is students' attraction to brutality. I have seen this repeated across the entire range of war curricula and courses I have taught over the years and outlined here, from Ypres to Bergen-Belsen, and now Vietnam. My pupils watching Vietnam movies were all drawn to a variety of particularly gruesome scenes, those that dealt most directly and unambiguously with battle, death, and trauma. As a result, many pupils in different classes, spanning across different years of teaching, unwittingly chose the same exact scenes as favourites. Jeanine Basinger's combat movies ask 'eternal questions' of their audiences, which are 'basic to our understanding of ourselves and our history' (Basinger 2006, 179). My students' violent selections suggest they are intrigued by the question what war is really like, or more specifically, what killing and combat are like. War's mental and physical proximity is ever closer for my pupils, because the media infuses their daily lives with scenes of war and violence. And yet, ironically, unless they join those on the plane to Syria and Iraq to fight, it remains a forbidden realm to them. The mediated 'combat gnosticism' of the Vietnam movies on offer lifts the veil of taboo draped over the violence.

Intervention Part III: Pupils Directing Scenes of War

Each of the groups of two to three pupils who had selected a Vietnam War movie from the IMDB-list I had supplied them with were given half a lesson to teach their class, which boils down to 25 minutes. Most pupils decided to use PowerPoint as an aid to help them show their two favourite scenes from the movie, which they had cut to four or five minutes. They would explain why these scenes were important to them, and give a brief technical analysis using the concise classroom handbook for viewing, writing and presenting about film. I had also given them a very brief introduction to Kate McLoughlin's tropes of war, which ranged from 'credentials' to 'laughter' and would help them discover and analyse potential universal aspects which McLoughlin claims war narratives have.[134] Finally, they had to argue to what extent the list of Basinger's universal aspects of war movies held true, thus deciding to what extent Vietnam war movies across time do or do not adhere to what Daniel Binns calls the 'grand narrative.' To illustrate these lessons, I have selected some stills from their PowerPoints to give my reader a better view of which scenes were chosen and in what way these affected my Generation Z pupils most.



Hendrika and Trijntje's excellent and dry-eyed analysis of the two 'Russian roulette scenes' from *The Deer Hunter*, for example, focused on the use of 'laughter as a diversionary tactic.'[135] Michael, played by Robert de Niro, tries to lure his friend Nick into playing the lethal game as a means to escape from the reality of war captivity, the girls explain. Yet they do this as a way to literally divert the guards from their impending escape. The mirror scene to this is the second Russian roulette scene, when Michael finds his old friend and former fellow soldier Nick, played by Christopher Walken, stuck in a limbo in post-1975 Vietnam, severely traumatised and playing the deadly game perpetually. Evoking his memory of them together as a way to try and make his friend escape from his deadly loophole, his repetitive trauma syndrome played out literally in the seedy environs of Saigon's underworld. These female pupils explain how Nick finally smiles in recognition of the memory of Michael and their deer hunting days, smiles and says the words 'one shot,' raises the gun to his right temple for his final game, blowing his brains out (Cimino 1978).



A scene that bears gruesome resemblance to this is the 'suicide scene,' from what has been hailed by many critics as the most significant anti-war movie; *Full Metal Jacket*.[136] The severely bullied character Leonard 'Gomer Pyle' Lawrence, played by Vincent D'Onofrio, succumbs to the pressure of army barracks life and its harsh discipline by shooting his brains out in the toilet just moments after killing his demon drill instructor. Just as stoically as the girls Hendrika and Trijntje faced the visceral experience of their violent scene, the 'fight-class' boys Sjoerd and Marinus present their extract without any qualms, as will several other pupil task groups over the course of time.[137] Then there were a variety of 'torture scenes' from the film *Rescue Dawn* (2006), which involve Dieter Dengler, played by Christian Bale, either dangling upside down from a tree for days or tied down to full stretch. Torture is a favourite with pupils, as is the flashback, which for them signals moments of relevance. The scene from *First Blood* (1982) in which Vietnam veteran John Rambo is teased out of a town ironically named 'Hope' by the aggressive sheriff Teasle and when he refuses to leave and is subsequently arrested, is a popular recurring choice of my pupils. In prison, Rambo, played by Sylvester Stallone, is forced to shave. The knife with which he is being shaved reminds him of when he was tortured as a prisoner of war, a flashback Lammert and Gerrit present with fascination, as do many pupils after them.[138]

Like the flashback, slow motion is similarly suggestive of essential meaning to my students, such as the girls Alberdina and Henriëtte. They show a scene from *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), when Ron Kovic, played by Tom Cruise, is shot in the heel and the shoulder in the high grass of Vietnam. The 'scenes concord real time with slow motion,' the girls explain, highlighting the importance of the moment Kovic shoots and is shot himself, coughing up blood slowly as he collapses to the ground.[139] My pupils even manage to repeatedly choose what is one of the few scenes in *Good Morning Vietnam* (1987) depicting any real war-related violence. Protest marches are crosscut with Vietnamese village bombardments and street violence and repression, all to the tune of Louis Armstrong's 'What A Wonderful World.' The stark contrast between Armstrong's lyrics and the scene cutting from one act of violence to the other never fails to beguile my pupils. 'The music works the same way slow-motion does, or zooming in on a tracking shot,' Abbas, Jozef and Ivo explain.[140] The latter uses his experience as a DJ by pointing out the power of the musical score accompanying the visual narrative, giving me the idea

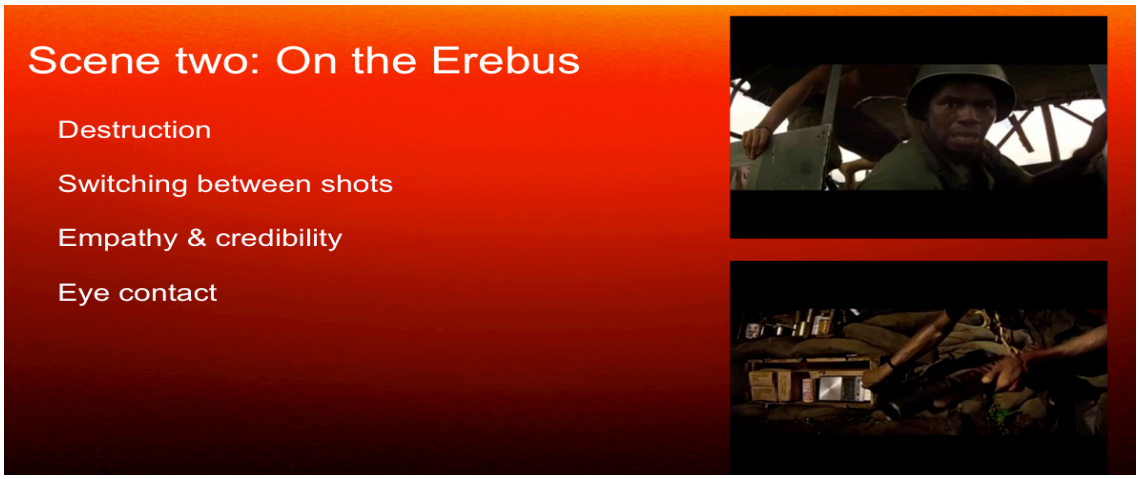
to consider adding song lyrics from the Vietnam era, emulating my World War I course, and thus broadening the increasingly multimodal curriculum further beyond the remit of English as a foreign language.

It would allow highlighting the link between Duke Ellington's song 'It Don't Mean A Thing, [If It Ain't Got That Swing]' to the hypnotic repetitive 'It Don't Mean Nothing,' a Vietnam expression meant to ward off implosion of the psyche due to combat stress by veterans, such the character nicknamed 'Doc' in *Hamburger Hill* (1987), played by Courtney B. Vance. It is a scene which stands out in the continuous slaughter that gives the hill its lugubrious name and serves as the title for the film based on a historical battle on Hill 937 in Vietnam, waged at great cost (it ain't got that swing) to the United States army yet at no strategic advantage (it don't mean a thing). Those pupils that choose this film, such as the boys Jeroen and Piet, always comment on this scene, though, admittedly, none unearth its intertextual potential.[141] However, pupils never miss the intertextual, multi-layered 'Ride of the Valkyries scene,' from *Apocalypse Now*, in which a full-scale military attack on a sleepy Vietnamese village is played out. Arguably one of 'the most iconic sequences in cinematic history', my pupils Anton and Bep explain that its seminal status is due to a combination of factors.[142] In what is a 'synthesis of audio and vision to create a terrifying, nightmarish vision of war being rained down from above,' the absurd behaviour of Lt. Cl. Bill Kilgore, played by Robert Duvall, is jarring (Binns 2017, 64). In a rain of bombs and bullets fired on the village by US helicopters, Wagner's musical score is blaring over their loudspeakers. United States soldiers, Kilgore prominent amongst them, are Valkyries, in the process of choosing who may ride with them to ancient Norse mythology's warrior heaven: Valhalla.

During the Vietnam War, and as the counterculture of the '60s played out at the home front, the American soldier, once the image of the honourable struggle for righteousness, had become a character of considerable contention, 'a symbol,' Westwell (2006, 64) argues, 'of America's fallibility and wrong-headedness.' And nowhere is the 'anxiety and confusion around the figure of the Vietnam veteran' portrayed to better effect than in the film *Apocalypse Now,* and the 'confusion and ambivalence' with regard to its main protagonists Colonel Kurtz, played by Marlon Brando, and Captain Willard, played by Martin Sheen (Westwell 2006, 65). This symbolic father-son relationship between the renegade cult leader Kurtz and his nemesis, the severely traumatised, ruthless Willard, sent to assassinate his father figure, is a literal reversal of the Biblical Abram and Isaac, a

story so excellently subverted by First World War poet Wilfred Owen in his poem 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young.'

The 'old man' Abram of Owen's poem, instead of listening to the 'Angel' and offering 'the Ram of Pride' in the place of his son Isaac, 'would not so, but slew his son,' and with him, 'half the seed of Europe, one by one' (Owen 1990c, 151). Owen thus exposes all war-mongering fathers who are unwilling to offer their diplomatic pride and sue for peace, who ignore instead the divine alternative and continue to send their sons to their early graves. Yet the girls Grietje and Ans show a scene from *Apocalypse Now* where the roles are importantly reversed.[143] Willard travels an epic journey on the PBR (Patrol Boat, Riverine) significantly named 'Erebus,' God of darkness and son of Chaos in ancient Greek mythology. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) used the HMS Erebus in his novel *Heart of Darkness* on which this film is based. Together with the HMS Terror, she set sail to discover the Canadian arctic, where the crews abandoned their ships and disappeared. The crew of the movie's Erebus go through a Homeric variety of episodes filled with violence and death. This increasingly disorientates and disintegrates the rationale Willard, who survives, and with him my pupil-viewed world. At the apex of the confusion is Captain Willard, the film's Isaac, who goes ahead with his mission to kill the Abram figure, Colonel Kurtz.



The narrative suggests Kurtz has been waiting and wanting this apocalyptic moment to happen, dictating his sacrificial death. The scene in which the captain attacks the colonel with a machete is crosscut with the simultaneous slaughtering of a cow by Kurtz's cult following. The viewer cannot miss this suggestion of a double offering of a

'Ram of Pride.' Thus, the movie becomes 'an allegory of Vietnam,' Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner (1990, 70) argue, 'that redeems the loss of war with a myth of rejuvenated male leadership.' The sacrificial death at the hands of his 'Isaac-Willard-son' paves the way towards redemption: the father/Abram character Kurtz atones for his failure of leadership and, by proxy, all of America's fathers for sending their 19-year-old sons thirteen thousand miles away to fight a seemingly futile war.

Such 'incompetent officers' represent 'the absent fathers of Vietnam' the impression amongst the young American soldiers that 'there was no leadership in Vietnam' (Sturken 1997, 106). It is a common thread in many Vietnam War films. My pupils seemed attracted by these generational conflicts. No less so in the 'third cycle' of Vietnam movies, amongst which is *Platoon,* in which Chris Taylor is played by Martin Sheen's son Charlie Sheen. This fresh recruit is orphaned into soldiery, a progress furthered by the absence of competent leaders when he arrives in Vietnam. He soon establishes *two* father figures in the form of non-com platoon sergeants Elias, played by Willem Dafoe, and Barnes, played by Tom Berenger. Both are long-time Vietnam veterans, hardened and skilled soldiers, and both have acquired a revered following within the army unit, which separates accordingly along borders of class, race and politics. These hint at old American Civil War divisions and reflect the rupture in the United States during the '60s, when anti-war protests and the Civil Rights Movement provided the backdrop for a steady escalation of the conflict in Vietnam. Barnes, a man 'without moral or scruples,' fights the war according to its chaotic and ruthless rules. Yet Elias remains 'compassionate and idealistic,' maintaining a 'moral standard' in even the most extreme situations of war (Sturken 1997, 100). There are times since I felt like the child born of those two fathers,' Chris Taylor says at the end of the film, referring to Barnes and Elias. Ultimately, my pupils show how orphaned Taylor, offering the 'ram of pride,' kills Barnes thus choosing Elias as his father, significantly named after the Biblical prophet who fought against his King's idolatry of a false God, and thereby United States' redemption.

It is salient that both actors, Sheen father and son, kill their on-screen father figures in both canonical Vietnam movies in which they each play the leading role.[144] In a climactic scene that many of my pupils choose to present to their class, Taylor wakes up in the aftermath of an intense night battle ending with a heavy bombardment. Father figure 'Abram/Barnes,' in the midst of the confusion, was ready to strike out his knife at the figure of his adopted son, 'Isaac/Taylor' underneath him. As the sun rises and Taylor stumbles to his senses, my pupils point out how the camera shows Taylor noticing the forest has revived despite the destruction, reborn to an Elysian tranquillity. Tropical birds chirrup and a deer passes, symbolising the rebirth of the good father figure Elias; the ram of pride is replaced through sacrifice by the deer of innocence. Elias has 'Apache blood,' the script of *Platoon* reads, just like John Rambo's native American heritage in the Vietnam War movie *First Blood*, which made Elias 'quick as a deer,' in life and afterlife.[145] Finding the evil father figure Barnes on the ground, Taylor takes a tentative aim at him with his rifle. 'Do it!' Barnes shouts, a scene many pupils have chosen as their favourite, and Taylor shoots him in the chest at close range.[146] Like the death of Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*, yet another Vietnam War movie's sacrificial death of the father.

Vietnam War films such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon* thus pave the way towards redemption of the American soldier and the American soul, 'as a means of catharsis,' to quote Sturken (1997, 120), 'and a way to derive something of value from this history.' Notwithstanding the struggle between South and North Vietnam, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dead, Taylor's choice represents what *Platoon* rescripts the Vietnam War into being: a fight within America itself.[147] 'I think, looking back, we did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves and the enemy was within us,' Taylor says as he is whisked away from the battle and the war by helicopter.[148] Daniel Binns (2017, 15) argues that because of *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon's* 'chaotic frenzy of the unbridled natural world and the unhinged human psyche,' they stray from 'the grand narrative.' Yet my pupils tick virtually all Basinger's boxes when analysing these films, nonetheless. Despite *Apocalypse Now's* fragmented narrative structure, there is a clear plot and 'objective' to the action: finding and killing Kurtz. From the moment the Perebus is boarded the film follows a 'key group with a 'democratic ethnic mix,' who 'conflict' as the journey progresses. The enemy remains 'faceless,' notwithstanding the real enemy, America itself in the guise of Kurtz and *Platoon's* Barnes. 'Death' is a great part of the plot when 'key group' members die, as do those in *Platoon's* platoon, amongst whom importantly their sergeants. The 'objective' of *Platoon* is implicit in its rescripting of the My Lai massacre, and it is one of the few moments the enemy is given a face. Here, the group of soldiers 'conflict' to their very American core.

In fact, my pupils corroborated that the Basinger rules applied to more or less every Vietnam War movie they analysed. Examples are *Hamburger Hill*, *The Green Berets*, *Casualties of War* (1989) and *Full Metal Jacket,* in which a 'key group' of soldiers 'conflict'

as the plot progresses and their 'objective' comes nearer. Though *Rescue Dawn* and *The Deer Hunter* focus on much smaller groups of POWs, the trope works on a smaller scale nonetheless, as the 'key group conflicts' about their 'objective:' escape (Binns 2017, 11). Although these films by necessity show the enemy from close up, it could be argued that these portrayals of POW guardsmen and torturers remain singularly flat and stereotypically one-sided, and thus in essence 'faceless' all the same. In all the Vietnam films my students present, 'death' has a huge part to play, though *Good Morning Vietnam* and *Born on the Fourth of July* are notable exceptions. Ironically, my pupils regardless pick out the few scenes of death and slaughter in these films, the bombing of the popular Saigon café in *Good Morning Vietnam* and Ron Kovic's accidental slaughter of the innocent village and subsequent killing of a fellow soldier in *Born on the Fourth of July*.

And so it is not the divergence from Basinger's tropes that defines the traditional narrative, but its adherence to them that allow a 'cathartic' effect (Sturken, 1997) of their dealing with the darkest pages of that war, of which the My Lai massacre stands as the most terrible symbol. 'There is […] an imaginative failure to grasp any real quality of the Vietnamese experience,' Subarno Chattarji (2001, xiii) argues, 'so that the war becomes a site for exploring American pathologies and traumas,' as the above analysis of Vietnam War movies such as *Platoon* and *Apocalypse Now* has shown. Though Chattarji's argument involves Vietnam War poetry, the 'disturbance to the national psyche' was so far-reaching that this 'reflected in contradictory narrative patterns of literary output' (Walsh 2009, 230). These significantly include novels and films. Previous chapters have shown 'contradictory narrative patterns' also, given the relative late ascendancy of so-called 'anti-war' poets into canonical prominence, the dominance of both children's and adult war narratives, and the way British canonical war poets are at the apex of political, societal and academic contestation during the commemorative centenary years. 'The idea of the nation is inseparable from its narration' (Bennington 1990, 132), underscoring the huge stakes involved when force fields attempt to set the narratives that define the collective memory of war. With regard to the Vietnam War, the epic war narrative has been taken over by movies. This implicitly undergirds my focus on different genres in different chapters and explains my students' appreciation: they like grand narratives.

The United States' post-9-11 political administration established close ties with Hollywood in order to foreground narratives 'with clear patriotic and pro-military tendencies' (Guy Westwell 2006). This has given rise to a contentious fourth cycle of

Hollywood War movies, including the Vietnam War film *We Were Soldiers*. Thus, 'recent war films echo the nationalistic sentiments of early war cinema,' Binns (2017, 187) argues, and appearing in 2002 shortly after the 9-11 attacks, *We Were Soldiers* seems a case in point. Returning to the 'victory in defeat paradigm,' the narrative outlines the heroic Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore, played by Mel Gibson, leading his soldiers in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam (Westwell 2006, 94). Scholars argue the film's gender stereotyping, accommodation of army customs and confusion surrounding the United States' entanglement in the battle are reasons why *We Were Soldiers* confirms 'war according to the positive formulations of the most jingoistic mainstays' (Westwell 2006, 108). Yet critics are divided on this point.

We Were Soldiers 'tries to get back to the idealistic impulse [of United States' commitment] to the defence of South Vietnam,' Philip French (2002) argues, the film's criticism is directed at the 'lack of preparedness' of the United States' army and 'America's inability to learn from history.' Furthermore, as French continues: *We Were Soldiers* 'tries to avoid triumphalism by giving the Vietnamese their due as worthy opponents and […] individuals' (ibid.). Indeed, my pupils are quick to point out that in this recent Vietnam War movie the enemy does not remain 'faceless,' contradicting Basinger's rules. What is more, contrary to what is considered integral to what Binns calls the 'ur-text' of combat movies; this film extensively scripts the soldier's wives.

Although *We Were Soldiers* outlines the heroic actions of Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore and his company of soldiers, his wife, Julie Moore, played by Madeleine Stowe, is an equally heroic leader of the wives who live together at the army base and are waiting for news from the

far Eastern front. *We Were Soldiers* was a popular choice amongst girls, and I assumed that this was due to the relatively large proportion of the film dedicated to the soldiers' wives, as they prepare for their soldiering loved ones' departure and ultimately receive the news of their deaths.

When I evaluated the course with the class, many female pupils commented on how they initially, like Hendrika, 'really disliked the fact that we had to do our presentations about a war movie. Mainly because I was afraid that those movies would be really bloody and violent.'[149] Their opinions changed after having seen their combat movie of choice, and the girls' striking conclusion that 'what we liked about the movie was that there was no real violence,' Wilhelmina comments.[150] After Hendrika admits that 'at the really bloody parts I simply didn't look,' I find out that what they really mean is that the violence did not shock them as much as they had feared it would. Wilhelmina quite liked it, and Hendrika chose to sometimes look away. Prisha, Antje and Antoinetta deliver an unperturbed analysis of a scene when Moore, who is losing the battle, is forced to call in air support and hundreds of soldiers are killed by a gruesome napalm bombing, including Moore's own troops.

It is significant that the journalist, the mediated 'truthsayer' Joe Galloway, is central to the scene portraying the loss of Moore's soldiers to friendly fire. It is this scene that is chosen by fight class girls Franciska, Dirkje and Bernardina. My class show no qualms when they watch Galloway trying to lift the American victim of the napalm attack to safety and failing because of thick layers of skin coming off in his hands.[151] These females, staying in character with the rest of the male dominated class, are quick to point out *We Were Soldiers*' many grisly battle scenes, commenting on their realism, by which they always mean violence. *We Were Soldiers* frequently uses a blood-on-the-camera embedded narrative viewpoint that was *Platoon's* trademark, by which the film, like its predecessor, 're-enacts' the embedded journalist viewpoint (Sturken 1997, 43). In this way, my pupils become complicit voyeurs of a contentious scene of war in the same way as the students of the '60s watching news reports from the Vietnam War on their TV screens. Yet the crucial difference is that for '60s teenagers the reports were real, and for my pupils they are fictional. Given the fact that my pupils are used to war invading their daily 21st-century peace via their mobile phone media feeds, it is alarming that they do not distinguish between news and film.

Thus the 'parrhestiastes' figure, always present in a war film according to the rules of Basinger, is easily trusted by pupil-viewers as an authentic figure. Randall Wallace, director of *We Were Soldiers*, relies on the presence of such a 'parrhestiastes' figure in the form of journalist and photographer Joe Galloway, an oxymoron given the fact that this is a fictional truth-teller. In doing so, Wallace follows one of the most important Basinger tropes since *The Green Berets'* embedded journalist George Beckworth was brought to the screen by actor David Janssen in 1968. Beckworth's character believes the Vietnam War to be between the Vietnamese people, arguing to army commanders: 'let them handle it!'[152] By the end of the film, however, swayed by the love for a Vietnamese child and her death by the hand of the North-Vietnamese, the reasons for American involvement are clear and the journalist's view is altered for good. *We Were Soldiers'* 'truthsayer' Galloway has in common with Beckworth that they are both initiated into the secret realm of the combat soldier. The fictional 'parrhestiastes' figures are forced by overwhelming enemy numbers to pick up a gun and join the fight, and thus gain what so many seek: 'combat gnosticism.' Both within the narrative's 'key-group' and to the viewing pupils, these characters gain 'autopsy,' and thus credibility within the narrative itself, making them credible characters to my students. Thus beguiled by Hollywood, from that moment it makes whatever 'truth' they tell within the narrative frame of the Vietnam War movie, as combat journalists in Vietnam, weigh double with their student audience.

We Were Soldiers thus establishes credibility following Basinger's rules, by embedding a journalist as one of the 'key-group' members, as much as *The Green Berets* does, a film widely considered as one of the most unashamedly jingoistic Vietnam War movies to date. Yet 'truthsayer' Galloway does not make the same moral shift as his '60s predecessor Beckworth. The allegory of the death of the Vietnamese girl is replaced by the death of the Japanese soldier Jimmy Nakayama; while fighting with Moore's platoon he is killed by their own napalm attack. 'Minority figures are always represented, […] even Orientals,' Basinger (2006, 176) explains as she outlines the 'key-group' soldiers. It is significant that this particular 'Oriental' is of Japanese origin, former adversary of the United States, who by fighting side by side with World War II's victor thus sanctions this latest of 20th century conflicts. 'The minorities almost always die, and die most horribly,' Basinger wryly dictates, and as the girls in class show, Galloway testifies to Nakayama's unavoidable and terrible death. 'They say: girls don't like a subject like war, but I liked it

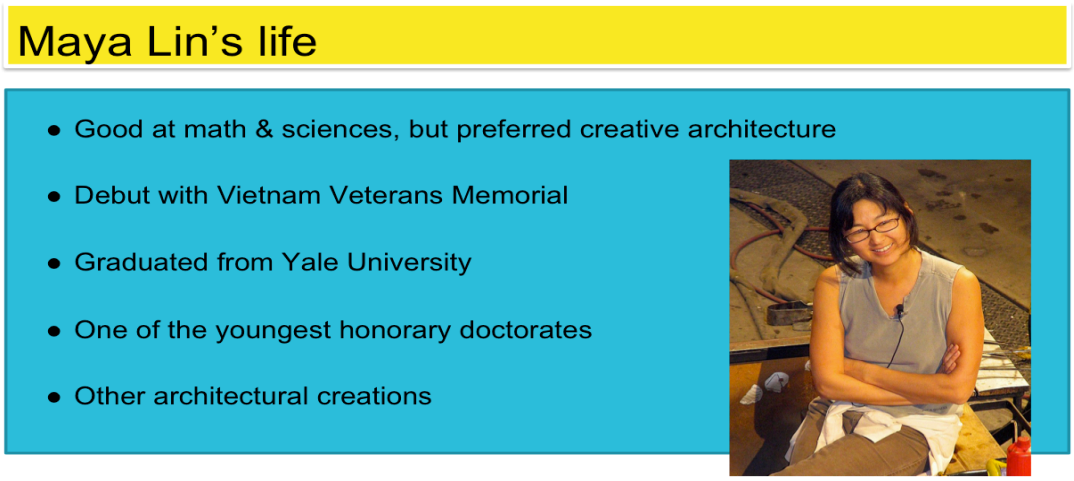
a lot,' Edith comments happily in her written evaluation.[153] For all the time spent with the wives away from war, *We Were Soldiers* does not shy from showing its deadly outcome.

Franciska, Bernardina, and Dirkje show another bloody scene that is indebted to the canon. A Vietnamese army viewpoint is focalised by the camera during the last attack up the hill, led by 'confident warrior father-figure' Harold Moore, towards ostensive victory (Westwell 2006, 107). 'Sir! If you don't find some cover you go down,' the loyal Sergeant-Major Plumley, played by Sam Elliott, yells at Moore in the heat of battle, 'and if you go down, we all go down. Come on,' thus re-establishing military leadership on the ground next to the 'grunts' and my student viewers.[154] Hollywood now seemed ready for a war hero and father figure who needs no redemption, let alone sacrificial offering, the 'catharsis' of the Vietnam film cycles completed. And so, *We Were Soldiers* both confirms the 'grand narrative' as well as contradicts it in its adherence to the Basinger tropes my pupils uncover. There was a frustration with this group of female pupils, which was palpable when they presented their film to their male dominated 'fight-class.' It was as if they had built up a silent rage, being a minority of just five girls in an antagonistic group of boys, being forced into a role of impotence. In another class, a year later, this sentiment is echoed when Dorothea writes:

> I don't think that girls won't be able to do this project just as good as boys, I think that's a stereotype which should be blown out of the world. I can handle blood and gore and violence just like any boy can. Of course, there are girls *and* boys who can't handle the violence.[155]

The girls weren't the only ones to uncover society's gender prejudices and given my expectation that *We Were Soldiers* was a female choice due to extensive home front portrayal from a female perspective, their teacher's bias also. One group of boys flatly refused to watch a Vietnam War movie, a genre they claimed dominated by American combat soldiers' perspectives and as such unashamed propaganda for the masculine military might and right of the United States. 'We want to show you scenes from a documentary film, with a girl as main character which is set in America,' Andreas and Reinder explain as they start their presentation to class. 'Our motivation to choose *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* (1994) is to show you that war is not just about American men fighting in countries far away,' they argue with considerable passion.[156] Yet Andreas and

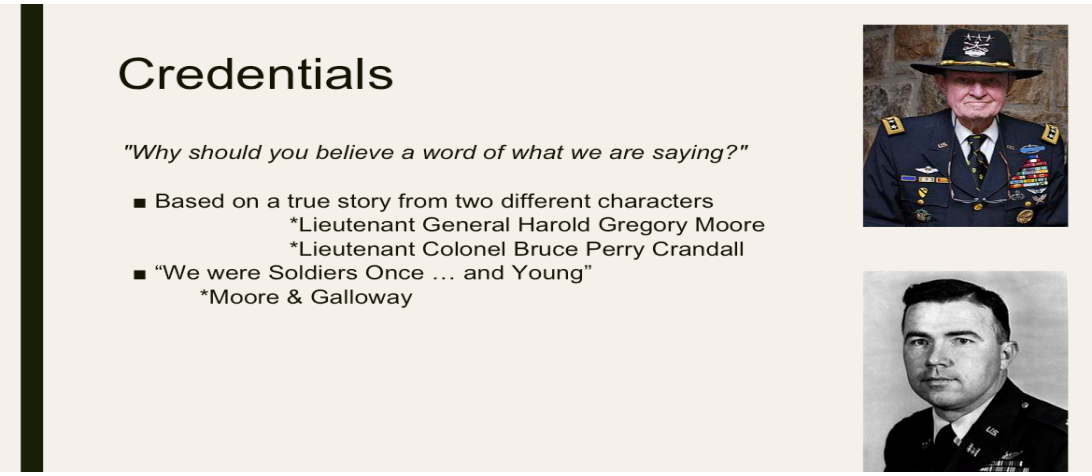
Reinder were the notable exception, they remain the only male pupils to date that consciously avoided combat violence. My pupils are attracted to a variety of particularly grisly scenes, those that dealt most directly and unambiguously with battle, death, and trauma. It compares well to my students' attraction to the darkest sides of Holocaust and trench warfare, their wish to become the voyeur, as I have outlined in the previous chapters. The girls' choice of scenes in the Vietnam film course is illustrative of the violent choices of their contemporaries, and one that is irrespective of gender.



Although by choosing a documentary these boys were veering away from the set form on the curriculum, I allowed it all the same. My pupils, in emulation of their teacher, were starting to shape the canon and the curriculum themselves. It is vital to let pupils contribute to a broader discourse vis-a-vis literature and the force fields, and by letting them create their personal testimonies of war. Even though it was not my aim to put documentary film permanently on the curriculum, letting Andreas and Reinder analyse and teach it to their peers in class all the same disarmed their resistance and allowed them to open up, learn, and shape their *Bildung*, and to the same positive effect on their English language skills.

Not distinguishing between fictional and real 'autopsy,' my pupils feel that the more battle violence is shown, the more the film gains credibility. The illusion of combat gnosticism of Taylor (*Platoon*), Willard (*Apocalypse Now*) and the journalists of *The Green Berets* and *We Were Soldiers* shows that more than any other genre, war movies have the power as 'pathos formula' to cast a spell of authenticity over my pupils. And it is not just the authoritative hindsight of these 'combat gnostic' soldiers that gives these films their

credibility. My pupils point out the 'realism' and 'truthfulness' of their war scenes, by referencing either to the combat experience of the director, such as Oliver Stone (*Platoon*), or the memoirs they were based on, such as Ron Kovic (*Born on the Fourth of July*), Dieter Dengler (*Rescue Dawn*), and Harold Moore (*We Were Soldiers*). One group of boys even stresses the significance of David Morrell, writer of the novel *First Blood*, being the son of a veteran who died in World War II. 'Credits of the film unfold against a military reference,' Basinger (2006, 175) dictates, and 'include the name of a military advisor.' My pupils cleverly link them to the Basinger tropes, many of which revolve around the establishment of mediated combat credibility.



My pupils use their own and scientific insight to conclude that establishing credibility is one of the cornerstones of combat movies. They uncover all 'four cycles' (Westwell 2006) of Vietnam War movies to lean heavily on Basinger's tropes that define the 'grand narrative' (Binns 2017), and these are stories that they hugely enjoy. What it has shown me is that it is up to the teacher to point out to pupils that these stories are mediated, and thus under influence from political agendas of those who wish to influence the effect of these war movies, lest they run the risk of following the pied piper of Hollywood blindly out of Hamelin.

The polemic way in which the Vietnam film *We Were Soldiers* was critically received is exemplary of the age my pupils have been brought up in since. 'It is now customary to see everything after 11 September 2001,' Suman Gupta (2011, 29) argues, 'as an unravelling singularity characterized as the "post-9/11 world."' Shortly after the release of this film, the (second) Iraq War began in 2003, a coalition led by the United States with Great Britain and the Netherlands as allies. It is the first chapter of what has

since been defined as the 'War on Terror,' which simmers still at the time of writing, almost two decades after it was declared by former United States president George W. Bush.[157] *We Were Soldiers* is a war narrative reflective of the 'post-9/11 world' it was received in. Its polemical reception reflects the way cultural memory is the moving target of the combined forces of society, science and politics, war narratives at its epicentre. Vietnam War films, by their 'renarrativization' of traumatic historic events such as the My Lai massacre (*Platoon*) and the American military defeat at Ia Drang (*We Were Soldiers*), have a 'cathartic' affect which allows for 'healing' (Sturken 1997, 42-43). This suggests academics and politicians believe war movies can sway public opinion and have a direct effect on recruitment.

Given the particular power they hold on my pupils, beguiled as they are with this genre's enticing form of mediated autopsy, this might well turn out to be true, though in what way is open to debate. Iraq veteran Phil Klay for instance, claims that, paradoxically, anti-war movies have been a driving force behind military recruitment. 'Nothing's an anti-war film, […] there's no such thing' the veteran narrator of one of Klay's authentic war stories exclaims. 'I went in [because of] *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*' (Klay 2014, 234). Showing a particularly shocking scene to his class, i.e., the relentless bullying of character Leonard 'Gomer Pyle' and the character's eventual suicide, has certainly not deterred my pupil Sjoerd – 'I'm gonna join the army, do something about it' – from changing his career wish.[158] '*Full Metal Jacket* has greatly influenced soldiers and would-be soldiers since it was released,' John A Wood confirms (2016, 110). Though it is beyond the scope of this book to argue either way, there might even be equal reason to suspect that the supposed anti-war hymn of the 20th century, Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est,' might well have similar recruiting effect on my pupils and helps explain why the former leader of a government at war, David Cameron, claimed it as his favourite poem (L. Thomas 2010).

My Dutch pupils show that all 'four cycles' (Westwell 2006) of Vietnam movies, however 'contradictory' James Walsh claims their 'narrative patterns' might be, ultimately bring to the screen the universal essence of what war is about (Stallworthy 2001, vii; Walsh 2009, 230). As McLoughlin (2011, 143) confirms, war 'comprises a shared set of challenges, the response to which emerges as similarities in written representations across periods and cultures.' Leaving aside whether watching Vietnam War movies might inculcate or eliminate war, pupils never fail to be convinced by their cinematic narrators' mediated authenticity, and their love for the 'grand narrative' these

characters are embedded in. My concern, therefore, as a teacher of English moving well beyond my remit of teaching English language, was not with the extent to which these Vietnam War movies were true, but 'with the impact they have once they are told' (Sturken 1997, 9).

The Havo pupils, raised in a post-9-11 world, in an age where teaching must 'testify' (Felman 1995) were unaccustomed to a literary and visual curriculum like this, with clear links to citizenship. The intervention I had titled 'Directing Scenes of War' had made 'something happen:' these troublesome teenagers had started to engage (Felman 1995). Since the rocky lesson on the Paris attacks and the chaotic state this so-called 'fight-class' was in before that moment, pupils felt they were safe, seen and taken seriously. The Basinger tropes helped uncover a universal narrative of war, as well as the prevalent gender bias, a few examples of how the Vietnam War movie task helped bring my pupils into significance. In that sense, my students were indeed 'ennobled', as Basinger (2006, 177) puts it, for having undergone the cinematic representations of Vietnam soldiers' combat experiences.

Improving the Intervention

Yet the task also had its shortcomings. Some pupils found it difficult to theoretically connect the Vietnam War to present day relevance, despite the relief they felt at having violence sanctioned within the safe confines of their curriculum. This, they claimed in their evaluations, was due to the fact that for them, both Vietnam and to a somewhat lesser degree the United States, are far away. They miss the geographical proximity and most of all, the collective cultural memory within the broad width of the Dutch cultural landscape. Some pupils, for whom these filmic anchors of memory from an otherworldly cultural landscape did allow them to reflect on the daily realities of the warring present, remark how their newly created testimonies miss the urgency they seek.

> From an interview on TV came the conclusion that a lot of Dutch teens wouldn't fight for their country if necessary. I immediately said that if it came down to it I would stand on that field. I explained why; I think that we should fight for our rights, for our freedom. We take it for granted, when so many people don't have the freedom we do. I would fight to keep it. These

> are the types of lessons I like, more interaction, more actual talk about the now! What would *you* do.[159]

Thus, one of the girls in my class, Dorothea, sums up the sharpest critique on the course I had developed since the Paris attacks of November 2015. Unperturbed by the violence, students like Dorothea feel they do not have the necessary tangible tie to help them reflect on the 'climate of war' in which they live.

It is my role as a teacher to recognise that because I have allowed Dorothea to reflect on the Vietnam War movie task the way she did, she is in fact reflecting on herself as an individual within a class and society. Students like her are not always capable of taking that bird's-eye view. The class had calmed down significantly due to the war movie course work, they had engaged with the movie, in their group and presenting in class and had enjoyed themselves. Yet taking the critique to heart all the same, I felt there was something missing. It was something which I had witnessed when visiting Ypres and Bergen-Belsen with previous pupils analysing narratives of the great 20th century wars. True, my pupils had engaged, but without an actual physical memory of travelling to a 'site of memory and mourning' (Winter 1996) to create an everlasting impression, these 'fight-class' pupils had not developed a 'prosthetic memory' their peers in Vwo had. One of the reasons to put war movies on the curriculum was my ambition to develop a budget-neutral curriculum, especially for classes with widely differing economic means. All excursions are costly, and of course I could not take these pupils to Vietnam. Travelling to Belgium or Germany as I had done with my Vwo pupils, and taking time there to teach, reflect, and let pupils create their testimonies is a considerable investment in time and money. Yet worth every minute and every penny.

I was mindful of another pupil, Petra, who had been blown away by her visit to the site of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam during a holiday with her parents. Eager to bring that experience into significance, she had inspired her friend Paula, who had ambitions to join the Dutch equivalent of Sandhurst Military Academy, Clingendael, once she had finished school, to write their school research thesis about the My Lai Massacre. They decided to focus on a variety of cultural representations, amongst which were *Life Magazine's* photographs of the My Lai massacre and director and Vietnam veteran Oliver Stone's cultural 're-enactment' of these iconic images in his film *Platoon*. Paula latched on to Petra's engagement with the topic once she had seen this film, with the helicopter scene

carrying Taylor away to the heart-wrenching tunes of Barber's *Adagio for Strings* leaving her most impressed. Mid-project, despite the girls' tourist and filmic experiences, they felt there was something essential missing, to their collection of historic, literary and often mediated sources: they wanted to get even closer up to war.

Delving deep into their emotive layers, Petra remembered a video she saw at My Lai of the soldier who flew into the Vietnamese village with his helicopter crew to stop the massacre, a turning point with tentative similarities to the 'cathartic' (Sturken 1997) final helicopter scene from *Platoon*. Half expecting to meet Charlie Sheen himself, they asked me to help them contact one of the three soldiers still alive who were in that helicopter: door gunner Lawrence Colburn. Realising it was a long shot to both find and contact Colburn, let alone get him to write back, Petra and Paula sent their question out via Facebook:

'What did you feel on March 16, 1968 when you saw what was happening to the people of My Lai, by the United States army, from the helicopter?'

> '*Ok I'll do my best. Your questions are very thoughtful. One condition, you must receive an 'A.' Glad to hear your well on your way to Uni. When first arriving [at My Lai] we were glad to see women and children leaving the area before the US troops landed. Thinking we were out of danger, we continued on low-level recon in other parts of the village. Upon returning to the original area, we saw the same people who were leaving piled in groups, dead or dying. We'd received no enemy fire, and were confused as to how these villagers met their horrible fate. Continuing recon, we saw more and more dead and wounded.*
>
> *We began marking the wounded with smoke, thinking the US troops would render medical attention. When returning to check […] they'd been shot through their heads. (Sorry for the ugly details). That's when Hugh Thompson decided to mark one more, then stay at a hover and watch. That's when we saw captain Medina approach her, kick her, then blew her life away. How did I feel?*
>
> *All three of us felt by marking the wounded we were indirectly killing them. How did I, we feel? ANGER! These villagers were no threat. What crime were they guilty of? We had to stop these bastards!*

'It's a really impressive story.'

'Very sad story, with many layers.'

'Yes I can understand. […] I don't know what to say to your story.'

'They got away with it. […] Man's inhumanity to man. […]

'Did the My Lai massacre change your opinion about the war?'

'Not really. Never should have been [in Vietnam] in the first place. Realized that after about 30 days.'

'Thank you very much. I have no words to express my gratitude.' [160]

For weeks the girls had heard nothing. But as their teacher I had noticed a significant change come over these girls. Petra and Paula had a light in their eyes that was shining violently. When suddenly, Petra burst into school and ran towards me, full of passionate intensity, shouting 'Sir! Sir! He sent us an answer, he sent us an answer!' Despite the extra-curricular possibilities that the Vietnam war movie course offers, despite the benefit of opening up the English literature curriculum to (war) movies, despite the obvious benefit of this course to opening gateways to citizenship and *Bildung*, despite the overwhelming and beguiling power of autopsy visual war narratives held over my pupils, I realised what my Vietnam War movie curriculum had needed. The interview with a war veteran had not only enhanced the quality of these girls' research project, but also given an injection to the rest of their academic work that year. The experience of interviewing Vietnam War veteran Lawrence Coburn gave Generation Z pupils Petra and Paula a life-changing connection the Vietnam War. Paula and Petra's interview with a veteran had broken the grand narrative, and foregrounded pupils' canon and curriculum shaping ability: it had created testimony and a lasting memory. I had long harboured the ambition to introduce my students to the blogs from the wars of the new 21st-century. I now vowed to explore the possibilities of inviting a veteran of war to the classroom, to which the following chapter stands as testimony.

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
(Eliot 2001, 4)

This is a strange new kind of war where you learn just as much as you are able to believe.
(Hemingway 2013, 275)

5. Pupils Craving for the Hurt Locker

Analysing the Dynamics of Meeting a Veteran in the Classroom Using McLoughlin's Tropes of War

There was an uncanny silence in the hall. Murmuring their 'hello Sir's my pupils shuffled in one at a time, each finding a seat around the big white table in the middle of the classroom. Bleak weather outside, these teenagers had travelled alone to Amsterdam on what was a dismal Dutch winter's day, which frostiness seemed to have permeated through the university's austere interior. Pieternella's, Margje's and Truus's eyes furtively scanned their surroundings, no warmth emanating from the bare brick walls and cold tiled floor of this famed academic institution. Aagje and Gerdina huddled closely together, just like the boys Edwin, Hendrik, and Ferdinand, finding comfort in fox-holed physical proximity. Strands of fiery red in Carla's otherwise dark hair the only colour in the room to break what seemed to my pupils the codes of traditional higher educational conduct. How different this functional, economical steel and stone to the warmth of their own secondary school's ancient and cloistered walls, whose nooks, crannies and crevices serve no purpose but to colour the playful canvas which is the backdrop to their daily school lives back in Northern Holland. While the frosty wind made moan the hard iron and stone rising from the earth of the academy's foundation, these pupils' encircled silence ensued as they awaited the arrival of a veteran in the classroom.

Challenged with the transfer of a secondary school class to the improvised setting of the VU University in Amsterdam, I was too logistically preoccupied to smooth away any anxiety with which my pupils arrived through the lofty main entrance, across the hallway

and upwards in one of the many lifts towards the twelfth floor: the faculty of arts. These teenagers had been eager to volunteer for this battle. My previous hosting of a war novelist, a war historian and a professor of war literature to visit and teach these secondary school teenagers on their own turf were no different. Eager not to miss any of the violence, the classroom was filled to the brim with pupils on each occasion.[161] Assessing who might be interested in a class involving the visit of a veteran of the Iraq war I was therefore not surprised that more than ten per cent of all sixth-year pupils volunteered to go over the parapet with me. Had it been organised at their school and outside their half term holiday, many more would have joined up. Extra-curricular lessons on war literature were in surprisingly popular demand.

The Dutch educational system is one where levels are determined at a young age: when children are still in their final year of primary school. This early selection of pupils is supported by so-called 'NIO-tests,' Dutch intelligence tests upon which primary and secondary schools base their selective judgements.[162] This generation of pupils had scored across the scale in these tests.[163] Yet as far as their talent for English was concerned, these students had no reason to fear talking to a United States army veteran in this custom-designed university seminar. They had followed the extra-curricular Fast Lane English program, which included the much sought-after Cambridge certificate. Moreover, these pupils' individual paths that converged here on this cold collegiate day had been varied to say the least. Students like Pieternella, Margje and Carla had excelled since their first year at 'Gymnasium,' which also included Greek and Latin. On the other end of the scale, Truus, Edwin and Ferdinand had climbed their way up from 'Havo' to 'Vwo' level, whereas Gerdina, Aagje and Hendrik had been forced to redo an entire extra year. For all their different preliminary educational paths and test-scores here they all were gathered as 'Vwo' students; the only Dutch secondary school level which gives direct access to university. Here they were, waiting for an American war poet to arrive.

This group of pupils underscore the fact that 'pinning down presumed educational levels at the age of twelve' is a 'cruel' system under severe critique and international scrutiny (Truijens 2018). Experts abroad behold the 'Dutch-way' with bewilderment, especially so the lack of objective norms with which to assess pupils' ability to flow to other (higher) levels of secondary education (ibid.). Some secondary schools, however, are finding ways to offer pupils the opportunity to shape and pave their own educational paths. On a Dutch National level the group of pupils joining me in Amsterdam exploring

their literary talents at the top end of the cognitive scale were amongst the avant-garde in my investigation of ways to offer tailor-made education.[164] Corroborating the critique on Dutch early selection is the 'VO-raad,' by making a passionate plea for the implementation of custom-made school exams.[165] Their ambition, Paul Rosenmöller explains, is to 'develop a diploma whereby pupils may follow subjects at different levels' (Kuiper 2015). Segregating teenagers within separate cognitive frameworks from a young age onwards is 'severely out-dated,' Rosenmöller argues, a fact underscored by my pupils' patchwork educational backgrounds, their paths now converging with that of a war poet (ibid.). For this unlikely band of brothers and sisters, this battle they had volunteered for was an example of education 'made to measure.'[166]

'Out-dated' as Rosenmöller argues the Dutch system to be, the political, societal and academic force-fields have converged to create a top-down educational storm which has kept Dutch schools in a deadlock. What I suggest with this book is that teachers take the lead to guide us out of this no-man's land by joining the curriculum-building force bottom-up. The interventions in the literature curricula I have outlined in this book are prime examples of 'school-based curriculum development,' or what Biesta and Priestley (2013) term the 'New Curriculum.'[167] Literature education in Dutch secondary schools has hitherto remained an ungoverned and disorganised territory (Witte, Rijlaarsdam and Schram 2010). My war literature interventions are multiple edged swords that aim a step towards a more widespread and structured curriculum design by teachers. Applying war literature in class teaches pupils language and establishes gateways to citizenship, develops individual *Bildung* and creates empathy. For 'what literature education can contribute,' Theo Witte argues, 'is creating amongst pupils the ability to empathise' (Witte, cited in Van Boxtel 2016, 5). This chapter shows that the literature class where my pupils were to meet a war veteran is an inclusive one. It establishes intergenerational empathy within the Dutch classroom between pupils that are not just torn apart by different racial and social backgrounds, but by a 'cruel' Dutch system of early selection.

This chapter aims to inspire colleagues globally to research ways to invite a veteran (writer) into their classrooms. The previous chapter has foregrounded the benefits of the multimodal Vietnam war movie curriculum, opening gateways to citizenship to a wide variety of pupils with differing cognitive, social, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Yet the passionate student output of an interview with a Vietnam veteran had convinced me that facilitating such an extra-curricular event sparks off an invaluable

lasting memory and creates a living pupil testimony. I am conscious of the fact that organising a meet-and-greet with a veteran, let alone a war poet, is a logistical challenge for teachers whose time is pressed already. Yet my teacher-reader will be surprised by the willingness of war writers and veterans to work with them in setting up a meeting in the classroom, as my pupils in chapter three who have met Miep Gies at primary school, confirm. Once organised with success, it presents the chance to consolidate and embed these into the curriculum on a structural yearly basis. This applies in very similar ways to the innovations suggested in the previous chapters. Challenging and changing the canon of war literature by inviting pupils to 'adopt a poem;' asking them to create their own war poem or film at or about First and Second World War sites of memory and mourning in Ypres and Bergen-Belsen; or reflecting on their violent times by taking on a Vietnam War movie in teams and presenting these in class: educative innovations like these come with an initial investment in time and effort on the teacher's part, yet rarely do these fail to pay off in high quality didactic output and pedagogical advancement, in the short as well as the long term.

Previous educational innovations suggested in this book will prove valuable structural didactic and pedagogical investments for pupils and teachers alike. This chapter will show that inviting a war veteran to the classroom will be no exception. Because not a single school, class, teacher and pupil is the same, inviting a war (poet) veteran to the classroom will have to be designed to suit each and every singular occasion. Like the curricular innovations described in previous chapters, the educational situation this chapter delineates does not offer a one-size-fits-all solution. More than anything else, teachers' and pupils' individual creativity needs to be called upon to either adapt their existing curricula or create new ones. Having received and applied academic help, this chapter aims to offer support to my teacher-reader in turn. During my design of the previous literary interventions and their effect in the classroom, Kate McLoughlin's (2011) tropes of war proved a great asset to understanding the workings of teaching war literature. Her theory applied in education foregrounded war narratives' 'autopsy' as a crucial ingredient to establishing 'credentials' with its pupil audience. Pupils' magical choices from *The Diary* highlight their lust for violence: the more 'details' of war portrayed, the more authenticity the narrative has. Imbedding a 'parrhestiastes' in the form of a journalist in Vietnam War movies creates similar authenticity amongst my

students. All in all, these examples underscore the importance of the literary trope 'credentials' in an educational setting.

This chapter will analyse in detail the dynamics of meeting a veteran in the classroom with the use of Kate McLoughlin's tropes of war, foregrounding my role as a teacher, literary historian and educational theorist in equal measure. Doing so, I will separate the theoretical wheat from the chaff, aiming to provide my teacher-readers with a hands-on analytical tool for a class involved with (writers of) war narratives. I will present a structured and detailed use of her tropes of war in this chapter, aware as I am that up till now, the practical outcome of applying McLoughlin's (2011) tropes of war in class has been slightly haphazard. A trope such as 'credentials,' which faces the challenge of epistemology, has been touched upon often throughout this book, proving it to be a very practical and powerful trope for teachers teaching war narratives. But what of 'duration' or 'laughter,' which faces the challenge of logic, a trope which this chapter will show opens up a first gateway to a situation whereby my pupils might get closer to veteran poet Brian Turner's literal and literary experience of war.

The six categories under which McLoughlin 'script[s] all war narratives' include 'credentials,' 'laughter' and 'details,' which faces the challenge of scale, as well as 'zones,' which faces the challenge of space, 'duration,' which faces the challenge of time, and 'diversion,' which faces the challenge of language (Oostdijk 2014, 355; McLoughlin 2011:1-20). I have chosen to give each of McLoughlin's six categories their own section throughout the chapter, indicating to the teacher-reader which tropes are at play at any given moment in the text describing my pupils' meeting the veteran in the classroom. Some of McLoughlin's categories will prove more lengthily at play than others, which has merited a repeated demarcation, sometimes in succession, each uniquely modified for clarity, underscoring my over-arching argument. Above all, my aim is for my teacher-readers to draw their own conclusions and retain the freedom to select at will from these examples for their own future teaching benefit.

Intervention: Veteran in the Classroom

As my students were anxiously waiting in the cold university classroom, I suddenly saw the former soldier appear around the corner, in the distance of the long, dark university corridor. A small far-off figure grew gradually with each step yet did not quite reach the length I had expected of a seasoned warrior. The years of peace seem to have been kind

to the combat poet. Gone is the physically hardened figure I know so well from the cover of his acclaimed collection of poetry, *Here, Bullet* (2005). Meeting the poet's deep-set brown eyes, I find myself shaking cold hands. Yet there is warmth in his grip. I expressed my gratitude to the veteran, for braving the harsh Dutch winter weather to come out of his way and meet my pupils. I can't help but think that compared to cold insomniac nights on Mosul's rooftops surrounded by insurgent snipers, this day must surely feel to Turner like a spring holiday outing. Freshly arrived from the launch of his book at his publisher in the Netherlands, he instantly handed me the Dutch translation of his war memoir hot from the press, a peace offering that I could return only with a cup of coffee, freshly blazing in a Styrofoam cup. Face to face, it was then that I saw the true depth of his eyes, their constant furtive flicker, a drop of sweat hurtling down his temple, a bodily alertness I only noticed meeting him up-close.

Walking into the makeshift classroom, Brian Turner, soldier poet and memoirist, is visibly on guard now, clutching the hot coffee I had thrust in his hands. Putting it down on the pristine white tabletop, together with a bag of books, the veteran sits down in the only empty seat at the head of the u-formed tables. 'I'm out of breath,' he says, drumming his fingers nervously, 'I have no idea how to start this. My name is Brian. You know that. Have you…has everyone read the book? […] Is everyone here?' the war poet asks, speaking rapidly while scanning the room furtively.[168] To my relief my pupils set the poet at ease immediately, breaking the ice with small talk. We had been waiting for the arrival of the boys Rudolf and Nicolaas, suspecting them of having succumbed to one of the many temptations the Dutch capital had on offer, on their way to the university. 'KFC, Sir,' Hendrik said, making best of an embarrassing situation, and the entire group broke into laughter. 'What's that? KFC? Oh no…' Turner replied. 'Yeah, KFC, sir, probably,' Hendrik confidently joked, finally turning Turner's apprehension into an authentic smile. 'Can I cuss in here? Cos I wanna make sure you feel comfortable, to say anything you wanna say. If there's something you think is just bullshit, just call it,' the poet continued, somewhat more at ease now.[169] The veteran Turner seems hesitant, cautious and inclusive and it is ironic that the students are more military, aggressive and eager in this class on war.

Establishing Credentials (Phase I)

'Send guys to war, they come home talking dirty,' Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien (2015, 77) writes, arguing that 'if you don't care for obscenity, you don't care for the truth.' Cussing, in other words, is the ultimate mark of a credible war story, and Iraq veteran

Brian Turner starts off this class doing so from the moment go. As I have previously outlined in this book, teaching war narratives shows that establishing credibility as a writer is a vital step a war story needs to make in order to engage teenage readers to experience the text. War literature, McLoughlin (2011, 22) dictates, is successful if 'the account in question is *salient* and, crucially, *credible*. McLoughlin's theory of writing war helps understand why for Brian Turner, this was far from a spring outing. The initial anxiousness in his approach betrayed the crucial question foremost in Turner's mind, as he entered the university classroom and met my secondary school pupils: '*how can I make you believe me*?' McLoughlin's trope 'credentials' allowed me as a teacher to adopt an academic bird's-eye view, to understand the classroom dynamics as they unfolded before my eyes between the veteran and my pupils. Keen to further explore to what extent her tropes offered guidance in the no-man's land that teaching war at a secondary school is, this chapter is testimony to that exploration.

Laughter's Relief

Anxious to establish good rapport with my pupils, the war poet jumped at the nerve-lifting bait that Hendrik had offered in the form of laughter. Much like battle itself, my students had looked upon meeting a veteran as 'a matter of deadly seriousness,' which 'add[s] up to a decorum of war writing' as well as decorum in classroom behaviour (McLoughlin 2011, 165). Explaining why, facing the task of representing war, many writers resolve to the use of laughter in their literature, McLoughlin (2011, 167) argues that 'Kantian / Schopenhauerian incongruity' and, in fact, 'Freudian relief' plays a role. Thus Hendrik's incongruous joke was the most appropriate thing to do, facing what was for him an abnormal and intense situation: meeting a veteran and author of war together with his secondary school classmates and teacher in a university setting. Breaking the decorum, 'Freudian' relief surged into the makeshift classroom, yet not in the least with Turner himself. Quick to establish credibility, laughter gave the combat poet the chance to prove himself. In war literature, McLoughlin (2011, 169) shows us, 'joining in the laughter, the reader is, to an unprecedented extent, *made to feel the experience of conflict*.' Likewise, laughter in the classroom paved the way for teachers, pupils and poet to 'embrace the suck' together, at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam.[170]

'Insofar as it is godless', McLoughlin (2011, 181) argues, 'the war zone resembles the universe of the Absurd.' There was something equally crazy about my teenagers from small town Hoorn, gathered together as a secondary school group in these stark

university surroundings and meeting a poet from the battlefields that had coloured the televised canvas of their youths. This 'failure or absence of logic,' known as 'hypologic,' defines the warzone (McLoughlin 2011, 168). It is an important reason for writers and fighters of war to seek relief in laughter. This class, however, was just as much defined by a logistical and organisational logic or 'hyperlogic:' a convergence of all parties concerned: their secondary school (teacher), the university, both Turner and their own organisation and preparation (ibid.). Reason enough for them to arrive as tensely as they had. It is the simultaneous power of the 'hypologic' and the 'hyperlogic' which characterize the war zone. My pupils' situation that day led them to such an early and definitive icebreaker in the form of laughter. Though there were no bullets being fired and bombs going off during this customised class, it was the closest my pupils could come to a live warzone, short of travelling there themselves: reading Turner's memoir and meeting the veteran in the flesh.

Establishing Credentials (Phase II)

'What do you guys know about me so far? War poet guy, wrote these books,' a somewhat relaxed veteran asks my patchwork pupils. 'If you've read the book then you know some stuff about me, right?' 'Yeah, your whole family,' Aagje answers him flatly, revealing an aggressive eagerness on the side of my pupils to take Turner's text head on. '[You met] the whole family, right?' Turner laughs cautiously.[171] Yet this interaction also laid bare one of the key aspects of war writing that make it so very powerful and, at the same time, complexly contradictory. Aagje's remark shows it is unclear for pupils when Turner, the veteran memoirist, is referring to his own experience (of war) and when he is referring to his literary representation (of war). As I have shown previously, McLoughlin teaches us that the 'trope of autopsy' is at work here. Soldiers like Turner have 'combat gnosticism.' This book has shown how pupils are attracted to war narratives written by veteran authors, singular in their claim to authenticity, and sometimes even dangerously so, as the 'Directing Scenes of War' intervention showed, pupils believing blindly in their fictional screen soldiers as if they literally had the experience of fighting and killing in the Vietnam War they depict onscreen. McLoughlin's trope of epistemology reveals another blind spot upon meeting the war memoirist Turner. For pupils like Aagje confuse Turner's biography, 'meeting' his 'whole family,' with the war narrative he created.

At various stages in this book, I have underscored the value of McLoughlin's theory to teachers of war literature at secondary school. 'McLoughlin's ability to cut through

historical periods as well as literary genres and come up with a basic script of all war narratives is vitally important for the study of war literature,' Oostdijk (2014, 355) argues. However, pupils' blind spots like the above come under attack. 'The key problem is,' Roy Scranton (2013, 352) argues, 'the use of literary texts and literary theory to draw conclusions and make generalizations about war.' As I have shown, the role of literature in the history and memory of war has been part of an on-going academic, societal and political debate, especially in an age in which 'anniversaries [of war] are given a hard sell.'[172] Scranton's critique of McLoughlin is that she insists on 'read[ing] the world through literature' (2013, 352). His point is that all literary sources, being authored, are a fallible representation of reality. Scranton, Iraq veteran and author himself, believes literature fails to truly represent what (the) war was really like, grist to the mill of historians like Dan Todman and politicians such as Michael Gove, critical as they are about war literature's mythmaking power. Similarly, the previous chapter has shown that watching Vietnam movies in class, most of which are categorised as 'anti-war,' does not have any measurable pacifying effect. Eager to influence the moving target of war, politicians and scholars especially place education under scrutiny. This chapter will show how the presence of a war poet and his own views and (literary and political) agenda adds a new dimension to the classroom situation.

Whether or not historical sources are any less authored than literary ones I leave to posterity. It is, vitally, a point McLoughlin readily concedes to critics such as Scranton. 'Accounts of war are *always* authored,' she underscores, 'in the sense that the gap between the experience and the representation of conflict can be narrowed but never completely eliminated' (McLoughlin 2011, 20). Complicating matters further, 'the authoring of war can involve distortion, exploitation and even plain lying' (ibid.). Contrarily, Tim O'Brien, who like Roy Scranton is also a war veteran and author, opposes his argument nonetheless. The Vietnam veteran O'Brien claims that this aspect of war writing is precisely the reason why literature is so much better at portraying what war is like than history is.

> In many cases a true war story cannot be believed. If you believe it, be sceptical. It's a question of credibility. Often the crazy stuff is true and the normal stuff isn't because the normal stuff is necessary to make you believe the truly incredible craziness. (O'Brien 2015, 70)

As I have shown, Tim O'Brien's 'combat gnosticism' will fall on willing ears with pupils debating war narratives in the classroom, yet so will the words of soldier Scranton. Offering help, McLoughlin (2011, 20) explains that understanding how the authorial 'obfuscations, misrepresentations and deliberate decoys' in war literature work, is an 'act of good citizenship.' What follows is that the teacher's role as guide and arbitrator in the classroom is vital, even more so with a veteran writer's literal presence in the classroom. Brian Turner's credibility as a former soldier brings the urgency, stress and necessity of war to an everyday class, notwithstanding his own views and agenda. Providing pupils with information and a comprehensive view of the situation, it is the teacher's job to point out the so-called literary 'decoys' so typical to war writing and writers, and thus guide pupils like Aagje through the epistemological no man's land.

Establishing Credentials (Phase III)

In handing me his war memoir, in announcing his name adding 'you know that,' asking my pupils first off whether they had read his book, in specifying he is the 'war poet guy,' who 'wrote these books,' which he demonstratively shows, in adding when they have read these then they 'know' him, and of course the way Aagje catching his bait in the ironic way she did: in everything Turner wants to establish his credibility. 'Why should [we] believe what you tell [us]?' is the question that is crucially present at the start of our meeting on the part of my pupils (McLoughlin 2011, 39). The poet needs to be believed, having used his 'autopsy' to transform the sublimity of his experience into fiction; he attempts the same in class. As my pupil readers and the veteran writer join in laughter the borders between fiction and reality, war and peace converge; where Turner goes, he brings the warzone with him. Yet, ironically, it is Brian Turner who feels so much less at home in this makeshift warzone than my pupils. 'I don't know if the ice has broken enough?' he asks my pupils timidly. Yet Hendrik's playful intervention ('KFC, Sir!') and Aagje's blunt remark ('Your whole family') show that in this battle it is the civilians who show their aggression. Throughout class it is Hendrik and Aagje who participate most and in doing so, show themselves as least anxious to challenge the war poet. 'If you wrote a book about the women in your life,' Hendrik asks, eager to probe the poet on the predominantly masculine viewpoint in his war memoir, 'what would the book be about?'[173]

Hendrik: 'What would the main subject be? Because now it's obviously war…'
Turner: 'I think, the challenge would be to write about war, another war memoir. But focussing only on the women in my family. […] We often think of women in our culture as nurturers, […] but it takes the whole tribe to go off to war.'
Teacher: 'I think there's a female here interested in going to war!'
Turner: 'You're probably the only one in the room who wants to join the army, maybe?
Hendrik: 'I do too, but not the marines [like Aagje].'
Turner: 'she wants to join the marines and you want to join the army?'
Hendrik: 'yeah'
Turner: 'That's interesting, maybe we'll get back to that later, ehm, cause…yeah, ehm.'[174]

Hendrik and Aagje take the bull by the horns, both seizing the chance to interrogate the celebrated war poet and veteran of the Iraq War. Their brazen and disarming Dutch directness is partly due to their heritage, infamous as the Dutch are for their bluntness and honesty so often mistaken for rudeness. But there is more at play. Their individual army ambitions give them the credentials that empower them to speak freely, as if on the same level as the veteran. Of the two it is Aagje who is implicitly elevated to spokesperson for the group: as a woman she represents the other girls present and as a future marine she has credentials that supersede the boys' in this class, that give her a sense of identity and lift her from the grey building and peer pressure and expectations. 'Life as a soldier affects his conception of manhood and masculinity,' Stacey Peebles (2011, 2) comments on the American soldier's experience in Iraq. 'War can make or unmake the man,' she explains, 'and today it is a proving ground for women as well' (ibid.). And so, three decades after Nosheen Khan published her study in which she attempted 'to retrieve from oblivion the experience of the muted half of society as rendered in [First World War] verse' (Khan 1988, 1-2), it is a young girl from West-Friesland who is articulating on behalf of the 'mute,' steering Turner's story of war.

My pupil Aagje sits confidently across from the veteran and addresses him in an open and direct manner. Turner, however, keeps averting his eyes, avoiding direct contact; it is evident that the veteran is taken aback by this future marine. 'It takes the whole tribe to go off to war,' the war poet stated, but it is clear he had not expected any of this teenage 'tribe' at the VU in Amsterdam to want to go off anywhere near a warzone.[175] 'It's harder to end a war than to begin one,' former President Obama quipped on the eve of American withdrawal from Iraq, in December 2011 (Jaffe 2016). His words ring true as my pupils meet Turner some years later, at a time in which the American air force, helped by the Dutch, were still bombing targets in Iraq. 'The expansion of roles for women in the [American] Armed forces has evolved since the early days of the military,' Kristy N. Kamarck (2015, i) argues. Yet in most branches of the American military, the ban on combat roles for women was lifted just a few weeks prior to meeting Turner (Kamarck 2015). It is clear the veteran of the Iraq war, frustrated at what McLoughlin calls the 'endinglessness' of war, is fazed by the idea that this young Dutch woman might go off to fight the same war in Iraq as he did a decade before.[176]

Though the 'male-dominated war zone' has opened up for pupils like Aagje, 'women are immediately singular' there all the same (McLoughlin 2011, 32). War has always been an experience, Stacey Gillis (2007, 100) writes, 'rendered through a small group of male poets.' And though Gillis argues in relation to World War I, as far as combat was concerned, not much has changed since that war produced 'the male agony of the trenches from the poetry of soldiers like Sassoon and Owen' (Kazantis 1981, xv). As I have previously shown, the Second World War opened up the register of war to civilians, *The Diary of a Young Girl* being the most famous and widely read narrative to come from that war. What is more, Khan and Reilly's mission to canonise what rendering the 'agony' of staying at home and the 'millions of deaths meant to the millions of […] women who had to endure them,' had succeeded (ibid.). Women's poetry of the First World War has found a marginal place in the canon and classroom a quarter century later. Yet with the exception of a Vietnam film such as *We Were Soldiers*, in which the soldiers' wives play an important part, the Vietnam War was once more a male narrated event. 'There is no getting around the fact that battle is a unique order of experience,' and similarly, male soldier narratives have hitherto dominated the responses to the Iraq war (McLoughlin 2011, 43).

Establishing Credentials (Phase IV)

At the end of 2016 the American death toll amongst women soldiers in current military operations reached 166, while those wounded in action reached 1033 (Kamarck 2015, 8). Statistics such as these might well hail the onset of female 'combat gnostic' war narratives to the canon. The supposedly sublime knowledge of battle is what lures the student reader like nothing else does. This classroom visit by a male veteran and poet of the Iraq war has a similarly magnetic appeal on my pupils. Wherever Turner's prose and poetry show clear and direct fighting experience, they are immediately and popularly singled out by my pupils. Though Aagje, like Hendrik, is critical of Turner's male dominated narrative viewpoint, it is his knowledge of war and the guarantee the war poet gives them as a former eyewitness to war that his story is close(r) to the truth about war that holds them spellbound. 'War enforces categorization even as it forces encounters across the boundaries of media, gender, nation, and the body' (Peebles 2011, 2), and the cult of 'combat gnosticism' bears part of the blame. Back in the classroom, Aagje has skilfully manoeuvred herself into the role of the veteran's psychoanalyst, an intriguing move in terms of authority in the classroom, forcing the warrior to concede there are 'not a lot of women,' that feature in his narrative, 'right? My grandma and my mother just briefly show up, but not that much, right?'

Aagje: 'You want to write about them as well, [don't you]?'
Turner: 'Yeah…I think I need to write another book, but maybe that looks, this book looks so much at the men in my family, mostly, I'd like to reverse it. I wanted to have a scene… my mother had her neck broken, in a car accident, and she had to wear this brace, […] for like six months, couldn't take it off. I wanted to write a scene about her and my father, 'cause my father would bathe her and clean her like in the shower, you know, and I just thought that was so intimate and beautiful? But then I realised that's just… I didn't want to intrude in their personal life […] so I didn't do it. But I feel like I…that was a mistake of me as a writer, because the writer part in me was like that should be in here… The challenge would be to write about war.'[177]

This tender intrusion into the private life of Turner's parents illustrates how hard that challenge is, just as difficult as keeping the narrative spotlight on the females in his family.[178] Though the story upon first hearing might seem about his mother, the focus in reality is on his father, a veteran whose hands once fired a rifle, now intimately and tenderly touching the mother of his soldiering son. 'But no matter what else he might do with his hands, love a woman, build a house, change his son's diaper, [a veteran's] hands remember the rifle,' the narrator of *Jarhead* (2005), a Gulf War movie directed by Sam Mendes which appeared shortly after Turner's tour in Iraq, tells his audience. The war seeps into the mother's skin via the hands that caress her. Like every intimate parental or marital scene, the door closes on sons (and daughters). Yet, my spellbound students feel something obliquely present about war and the veteran's pervasive presence. The deep timbre of the poet's voice is not what carries him into the story, but his deliberate 'drawing attention to something in the very act of appearing to pass it over' (McLoughlin 2011, 143). The mother's hurt is not her broken neck, but her husband's hands massaging the war into the body that brought forth her warrior son. Fighting his war, he could die at any moment, even this most private one.

Expanding beyond masculinity and war, Turner tells his teenage audience this intimate story from the female family home. Yet, contrarily, it is a home where war is pervasive. By making his parents privacy public and focussing the lens as far away as possible from desert battlefield and city guerrilla, the war seeps in the shower scene until every drop of water is contaminated. 'Nothing but hurt left here,' the poet writes in his most famous war poem, the broken neck is a 'diversion,' the real 'hurt' are the rifle hands that intrude cautiously upon the female body, the womb that spawned a soldier (B. Turner 2007a, 21). Turner's story about his mother's broken neck feels like a confession, a warrior man's story of guilt towards a mother. Answering Aagje, his narrative has opened 'the hurt locker,' and the 'knives and teeth' of war enter to take centre stage (ibid.). The poet highlights the war by diverting from it, accentuating the tender home scene, a literary technique referred to as 'paralipsis' (McLoughlin 2011, 43). For my pupils, part of their attraction to meeting the poet was that his poem inspired the title and theme of the Oscar-winning movie *The Hurt Locker* (2008). And here they were, faced with Turner's hurt. 'Why do you write?' one asks, softly treading on the war-torn cloth the poet had spread out before them.

Turner: 'My unit went back to war, my country stayed at war and my country fought wars but didn't talk about it. So, it seemed important to me not only to write the poems but to share them. Part of my reason [to do so] was because my country was silent. It's not paying attention to the wars that it wages. And that to me is a kind of pathology. There's an illness or a sickness in a country that can wage war and kill people, put the dirt over their bodies, take the last breath of their life and pay no attention to them. I mean that's…that's a deep sickness…So it's part of the job of the writer to ask questions.'[179]

Seductive Details I

In the poem 'Here, Bullet,' a favourite amongst my students prior to meeting its author, the narrator plays a deadly game of truth or dare. And the narrator follows the full consequence of that dare, 'if a body is what you want' throughout the poem (B. Turner 2007a, 23). As the soldier-narrator calls the bullet as one would a dog named 'Bullet,' the stroll he is planning to make sans canine is a playful dance of death. Taunting this deadly pet, in the run-on line daring 'to finish / what you started,' 'Bullet' calls the soldier's bluff: in this game of war the consequence is the narrator's death, 'every time' (ibid.). In emulation of Christ, the body of the 'combat gnostic' narrator is offered 'bone,' 'gristle,' and 'flesh,' the 'aorta's opened valves.' With relish my pupil readers follow the journey of the killing device from the 'insane puncture into heat and blood,' violating the soldier's volatile body. There is no 'diversion' from war here, no escape in Turner's poetic oeuvre. The majority of his war poems zoom in on the details of war from the moment my pupils start reading. Examples are the 'gunfire' in 'What Every Soldier Should Know,' the 'AK-47' of 'The Al-Harishma Weapons Market,' the 'bodies' in 'Body Bags,' the 'rockets' of 'Katyusha Rockets' and of course the 'Bullet' in 'Here, Bullet,' notwithstanding the detail of war embedded in the titles that all these poems reveal (B. Turner 2007a, 15-73).

Turner's prose proves no different, zooming in on the details of war from the very first page. It is these details of war that bring tension to the story, make sure 'anything is possible' (B. Turner 2015, 9). It is the fragments which include the tension details of war bring which are most popular with my pupils. 'A dead farm animal on the shoulder of the road could harbour an improvised bomb sewn into its belly. A bullet might ride the cool

currents between one human being and another' (ibid.). The parallels in Turner's prose with his poetry are striking, in this case the 'inexorable flight' of a bullet 'hissing through the air' in 'Here, Bullet' (B. Turner 2007a, 23). Riding at the head of 3500-strong American military column in his 'Stryker,' the narrator feels he is a cog in the grand military narrative of history, much Like Alexander the Great meeting the Persians centuries before. Like Alexander, Turner (2015, 9) 'rode on a war elephant,' though the poet's is 'made of steel.' Turner likewise replaces the vultures of antiquity with 'Blackhawk helicopters [which] escorted us from their stations in the sky' (ibid.). The moment intensifies as Turner is forced to stop the entire column, as there are 'four men in civilian clothes' walking towards him, 'single-file and evenly spaced, the way that soldiers do, each trying to conceal an AK-47' (B. Turner 2015, 10). The plot thickening, the narrator aims his 'M4' and the 'sight's center dot […] right about where his first or second rib curved beneath his coat' (ibid.). It is clear Turner has a specific preference to convey tactile details of war, such as weapons (the 'AK-47') and the body (the 'curved rib') in his war prose as much as he does in his war poetry.

Seductive Details II & Zones' Urgency I

My pupils crave such details of war. They dislike what they call the 'vague' fragments in his memoir as Ferdinand put it, 'when it feels you are describing your holiday.'[180] Turner's memory of the face-off in the Stryker comes to him in Kyoto, looking at a painting of a warrior stretching his bow poised for the kill. 'The point is to become one with the moment,' Turner (2015, 11) concludes. The irony is, my pupils accept the credibility of the narrator's moment in the Stryker, but not his sudden shift to peacetime Tokyo. Turner offers his own take on Brooke's 'corner of a foreign field / That is forever England' (J. Kidd 2014). 'Part of us died in Iraq,' the Iraq veteran confesses: 'we are like ghosts still wandering the landscape' (ibid.). Yet my pupils prefer the urgency of the soldier in the warzone to his ghost traversing zones of peace. They prefer reading about the veteran's love for his weapon and his flirtation with bullets, which feels suicidal to his student readers, especially when he dares them to 'finish what they started' (N. Turner 2007a, 23). This technique, McLoughlin (2011, 72) explains, through which 'the massive scale of war finds its best communication in localised, focused images recuperated from the generality,' is called the 'synecdochic approach.' For my pupils, the veteran's authority comes with the details of war he relates, and Turner does not hesitate to take such 'localised images' to their ultimate outcome.

In his poem 'Eulogy,' his battle savvy narrator speaks more honestly about war even than literary forbears like Siegfried Sassoon, revealing to my student readers his name: 'Private Miller.' A century after the anonymous death of Sassoon's 'simple soldier boy,' who 'put a bullet through his brain,' Miller 'pulls the trigger to take brass and fire into his mouth' (Sassoon 1983d, 119; Turner 2007a, 119). In the poetic tradition of Sassoon, who from his brutal experience in the trenches of World War I created so-called 'parrhestiastes,' or truth-telling narrators of war (cf. McLoughlin 2011, 30), in his poetry, Turner goes a step further. He applies what McLoughlin (2011, 53) describes as the 'name-tallying approach,' another mode through which the enormity of war may be accounted for: naming the names of the (fallen) soldiers. Some months before meeting Turner, my pupils had attempted to grasp as clearly as they could what a battlefield with more than a million dead soldiers resembled (Laqueur 1994). They visited various sites of memory and mourning in and around Ypres. Naming the individual soldiers can 'adjust the scale of conflict for human comprehension' (McLoughlin 2011, 67), because for some of my students the enormity of names had a numbing effect. The sheer immensity of war can cause an extraordinary loss of ego (Ferguson 2004). It is war poets like Turner who strive to counter this, bringing back from oblivion the individual narratives of soldiers.[181]

In an effort to 'maintain an aura of singularity' (McLoughlin 2011, 30), which Turner knows will spellbind his audience, the poet takes flirtation with death to its ultimate and tragic outcome: 'Private Miller pulls the trigger / to take brass and fire into his mouth' (B. Turner 2007a, 30). Naming names, and importantly, telling Miller's story, the poet is aware of both the tradition of using this narrative technique and the way he uses it to tell a story of taboo, suicide in a wartime army. Miller chose his death along the Tigris River; Brooke predicted his upon setting sail towards the Aegean Sea. He wrote a tribute to the narrator's own death, a 'proleptic elegy' in Rae's terms (2003, 265), or a 'self-elegy' in Kendall's (2006, 167). Authorial death is what gives the poem its power: Brooke's last resting place Skyros now is 'forever England' (Brooke 2014, 106). Brooke in turn was inspired by 'Drummer Hodge's grave, a 'kopje krest' under the 'foreign constellations' of South Africa (Hardy 1993, 1696-7). 'Lost boy though he is on the other side of the world, he still has a name,' the eccentric teacher 'Hector' points out in Alan Bennet's *History Boys* (2004, 55) appearing the same year as Turner's war poems in 2005, and a firm favourite with my pupils ever since. 'How old was he?' the student asks, and

'Hector' replies 'if he's a drummer he would be a young soldier, younger than you probably' (ibid.). Thus, formerly unknown soldiers 'Miller,' 'Hodge' and 'The Soldier' are given their own verbal Cenotaph: the poem is their eternal resting place and allows pupils to see the war close up.

War's Duration II

It is for my students to imagine the veteran they have sitting with them in class as a young man, and by virtue of his presence impossible for them to imagine him as a casualty of war. The name tallying in his poem 'Eulogy' allows my pupils to envision (this aspect of) war better. Turner breaks a taboo by going beyond Sassoon's 'diversions' in 'Suicide in the Trenches,' giving his 'simple soldier boy' a name. For Turner, as for my pupils, 'PFC B. Miller (1980 – March 22, 2004)' is suddenly real, brought into my pupils' lives by the taboo-breaking narrative of his suicide and the visible effect it has had on the veteran in the classroom (B. Turner 2007a, 30). For Brian Turner, 'I have to live with…' proves to be a persistent phrase, a recurring theme of 'complicity' (J. Kidd 2014), something which my pupils notice when speaking with the war poet. 'Difficult to live with,' the poet keeps repeating, as a mantra almost, shortly after my unmuted pupils led by the fearsome Aagje have forced Turner to take the role of the so-called 'parrhestiastes,' the figure who speaks truthfully about war, from the page and into the classroom.[182]

> Turner: 'This gentleman here, with black leather jacket, we had written RPG on his back. That was for us to remember who fired the rocket-propelled grenade. We're like police officers at this point. I would write the depositions at the base. It would be translated into Arabic. So, when it went to court, my words were what would put those prisoners away…Difficult to live with. Sometimes you know; yeah that guy fired an RPG. But sometimes you don't. What did that guy do?'[183]

Feelings of survivors guilt and loyalty to the dead are the prime reason preventing soldiers like Turner from telling their story and thus moving on. When talking about the death of his comrade Restrepo in the eponymous movie (*Restrepo* 2010), one of the few on the war in Afghanistan to date, specialist Miguel Cortez confesses, 'I can't even sleep, honestly. That's how bad the nightmares are. To sleep and just see the picture in my head is pretty bad.'[184] And yet for this soldier, losing memory of 'Restrepo' is like losing him for

good. What is often unacceptable for veterans of war, Bessel van der Kolk explains, is that the construction of a narrative about such a traumatic event makes it into something that can be closed off.[185] War might have an ending date in the history books, but it is often 'endinglessness' (McLoughlin 2011) to its victims and veterans. Back in class, listening to the veteran's feelings of 'complicity,' I wonder how far the war-poet will allow my pupils' aggressive probing, how much Turner, like specialist Cortez, will tell them, and in doing so how much he will let go. 'It happens on a Monday, at 11:20 A.M.' Turner writes, facing similar demons like Cortez in *Restrepo*, and taking them head on in his poem 'Eulogy' (2007a, 30). Its closing lines refer to both poet and his brother in arms, 'Private Miller,' who 'has found what low hush there is / down in the eucalyptus shade, there by the river' (ibid.). The poet finds in writing the closure 'Miller' finds in death.

Much like the work of his predecessors Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon almost a century before, Turner is out to have 'the costs [of war] acknowledged and the truths [of war] told' (Kendall 2013, xxi). One of the ultimate tragedies and truths about war for a soldier is not 'that you might get killed out there,' Sebastian Junger, director of *Restrepo* and *Korengal* (2014) explains in his war blog. Rather, 'it's that you're guaranteed to lose your brothers' (Junger 2013, 235). Brother in arms 'Miller' has been accounted for; the demons Turner is still facing as my civilian pupils meet him in class are somewhat unexpected; they are the enemy (dead). 'There are moments,' James Kidd (2014) writes, that 'even the resilient Turner alludes to his own psychological scars'. The poet is eagerly egged on by all my pupils now, guided by the future marine in their midst. 'Should I just keep on talking?' he asks softly, but the question proves rhetorical as he continues tentatively (B. Turner 2007a, 30).

> Turner: 'I could describe something about this cover. Because this is a photograph… But it's been doctored and changed. So, it's me, I had them minimize me, so I'm smaller and in the background. If you look here, it's kind of blurry, and you can also see there are vehicle tracks right here? There was a Stryker, the vehicle I describe in the book? That was here, with the ramp down, facing away so you could see inside the back of it? We just took it out, not a big deal actually. But the thing that was tricky was that right here there were three Iraqi prisoners…they were on their knees, ehm… what you do is you put one foot over the other knee and make 'em

> sit on their ankle… Their hands are flex-cuffed behind them with zip ties and they had sandbags over their heads. So, the three of them are here, facing away from the camera looking at me. And Jackowski my grenadier is now where you are. So, he's taking a photo of me outside and the three prisoners are here. There were actually ten to thirteen prisoners in a big circle' (ibid.).

Diversion's Advertency II

While Turner is relating this gripping narrative, my pupils are hanging to the poet's every word, while constantly glancing at the jacket of the book that they now discover was the biggest 'diversion' of all. It is significant that the cover of the selection of poetry is not what it seems, put right out there as if the poet is warning his reader: search for hidden clues, be aware and read between the lines, go beyond the obvious; the details of war and this admonition establish my credibility. The many questions he asks suggest he is curiously seeking confirmation from the audience he is educating. 'There are still things I don't share around it. There are things that have to do with other people in the platoon that I don't talk about' Turner confesses (J. Kidd 2014). 'They are things for other people to write about' (ibid.). Other people like grenadier David Jackowski, who took the photograph and sent it to his former sergeant as a story to tell. And although it is an image which became world famous as the cover of his award-winning collection of poetry, establishing his name and fame, right up to lending theme and title to an Oscar-winning war movie, Turner has diverted his readers from the truth it tells. 'It's the writer of war's job to ask the questions more clearly, not to answer them,' he had warned my pupils, and roles reversed, my students are asking the questions.[186] Turner's confession has excited them, like a tentative initiation into the cult of 'combat gnosticism,' as if they have come even closer to discovering the secrets of war.

This secret something, a brotherhood which has lured so many young into the army, held its age-old spell over my pupils. The significant change being, as the self-appointed leadership of future soldier Aagje shows, that nowadays, it is a sisterhood of battle secrets too. 'All wars are boyish,' Walt Whitman (2006, 65) quipped, but the female pupils in my classes have shown throughout this book that for this Generation Z, all wars are girlish too. 'Soldiers have discovered that no one is very interested in the bad news they have to report,' Paul Fussell (2013, 184) argues. 'What listener wants to be shaken

when he doesn't have to be?' *My pupils do*, is the unambiguous answer from the everyday reality of the classroom. From the lesser and best-known poets of World War I and their trenches of Ypres, reading Anne Frank's diary and taking it to its dismal and hitherto hidden end in Bergen-Belsen, and watching Vietnam War movies in class, at no point did any of my pupils look away from the 'bad news' these war narratives conveyed. On the contrary, my pupils wanted to be 'shaken,' and no less so by the veteran they were meeting in a tailor-made class in Amsterdam. Melting the ice, 'joining in the laughter' of the joking 'KFC' camaraderie, they wanted to be made to feel the experience of conflict (McLoughlin 2011, 169). Just like the pupils I had taken to Bergen-Belsen, who got as close as they could to Anne Frank's experience, they wanted to become what Gary Weismann terms 'nonwitnesses'.[187] The moment Turner walked into class bringing details of war it gave him the credentials to hit home with my pupils. Now the diversions within Turner's narrative, uncovered by my pupils' probing, felt like an exciting initiation, a discovery of a gateway to the sublime experience of war.

Turner has deliberately left an empty space where once stood three hooded Iraqi prisoners of war and his 'Stryker,' an entire 8-wheeled armoured vehicle that could carry up to nine soldiers. 'That's one hell of a photoshop,' Gerdina whispers, as she tries to fill in the empty space of the cover image which now seems even bigger than before.[188] Empty spaces in war narratives vary widely. Jacques Derrida was known to have a 'sixth sense for these empty spaces, the silences and tensions, inconsistencies and strategies, decisions and hierarchical order, in other words, for the economy of a text' (IJsseling 1986, 15-19). As a post-Holocaust scholar, Derrida builds his theory on Theodor Adorno's numbing literary legacy, that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. [189] The Holocaust is an 'event at the limits' Saul Friedländer (1992, 3) argues, which 'tests our traditional conceptual and representational categories.' The experience of battle, it seems, truly does 'resists depiction' in many ways, as McLoughlin argues, and Turner's rubbing out the war from his cover photograph is a case in point. Derrida's post-Holocaust scholarship, however, might also offer a way out of war's catch-22, for 'at the spot where the empty spaces are discovered, texts arise, in the margins of an existing text' (IJsseling 1986, 15-19). It is the teacher's goal to guide pupils past this most elusive of Derridean decoys in war writing and in filling up what he calls the margins.

Speaking to the war poet has given my pupils the impression that there is still something lacking or missing. As if the extremities of war, its darkest, perhaps divine

secrets are not told. Turner's war narratives are no exception; the absences like the Photoshop confirm the rule. Like Derrida, students might develop a sixth sense for the different levels in texts, and there are as many layers to a war narrative as there are different pupils in a classroom. Doing so brings them closer to 'the infinite, solitude, emptiness, darkness and terror' with which the sublime is associated (Cuddon 1992, 928-30). Scranton (2013, 350-53), underscoring the important connection between concepts of the sublime and war, argues that 'the connection McLoughlin makes between authorial disavowal and the sense of the sublimity of war is an important one.' For my pupils it is equally vital. There is a 'suggestive power of the absent' in war literature, which hints at extreme secrets, something that is beyond words, which makes my pupils 'free to enlarge the significance of incomplete information' (McLoughlin 2011, 156-8). It is these enlargements that allow my pupils to truly engage with the text, motivating them to go a step further through the creative gateway which the spaces in these 'pathos formula' texts allow. They are a gateway to the sublime of war and pave the way towards empathy: understanding the other, creating testimony and memory.

There is no reason why my pupils' imaginations should be inadequate to imagine the horrors devised by soldiers. For as Paul Fussell (2013, 184) noted sagely, 'a language devised by man' should be able to 'describe any of man's works.' The most famous text to come out of the horror of the Holocaust is *The Diary of a Young Girl*, and it is a case in point: the concentration camps are not present in this narrative, yet they are ever present in the empty spaces of the story in the full horror of pupils' imaginations. Similarly, the terror of torture at Abu Ghraib prison during the Iraq War seems absent from Turner's poetry and prose. Yet as will become clear, its presence is revealed in what Derrida calls the 'margins' of his text. Given that 'experiencing' the text is crucial to literary understanding (Herder 2018, 35-39), empathy with the characters is an essential pathway to developing 'envisionments' of literary worlds and crucial in the development of understanding others (J. Langer 2011, 10). What follows is that the sublime lies in the creative way my pupils remodel their impressions of war. Associated with 'powerful emotions' and 'spiritual awe,' as well as 'vastness,' 'immensity' and the 'concept of genius,' it is no wonder that the empty spaces in war narratives coincide with the realm of the sublime (Cuddon 1992, 928-30).

Back in the classroom my pupils and the poet were still filling in the 'margins,' the empty spaces of Turner's war narratives. 'What images do you have of the Iraq War?' the veteran asks them.[190] The fellowship of pupils he was addressing in this class, patched together from all levels of school life now together as majors in the sixth form of our school, were part of Generation Z. They are the post-9-11 generation, 'ethnically diverse' and both 'progressive' and 'pro-government,' for whom terror attacks such as MH17 and 'Paris' might well turn out to be their very own 9-11.[191] These pupils were more used to war and violence as the backdrop to their young lives than many generations before them had been, for the second foreign attack on American soil in United States' history has certainly proven a catalyst for perpetual global violence. They were toddlers during the 9-11 terror attacks, the ensuing War on Terror fought out in Iraq and Afghanistan dragged on throughout the decade and remained a permanent news fixture during their childhoods. The military presence of coalition forces included more than 7500 Dutch soldiers in Iraq and close to 4500 in Afghanistan, where the Dutch army has been part of operation 'Enduring Freedom' since October 2001 and still is at the time of writing.[192] When president George W. Bush promised the war would 'not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated,' he was as good as his word: the war Turner had left behind more than a decade before was the same one my pupils Aagje and Hendrik were about to engage in.[193]

Hendrik: 'Well we've all read your book so maybe that's altered our perspective of war.'
Turner: 'maybe, maybe, yeah…'
Hendrik: 'When I think of [the Iraq War] I think of a ruined little village somewhere in the desert or American soldiers walking and slightly looking up expecting a sniper or an RPG going off.'
Turner: 'Ok, yeah… That makes sense to me…but ehm, […] I don't know if you guys have heard of Abu Ghraib prison? Doesn't really come up in the book that much, a little bit but…Abu Ghraib?'
…
Teacher: 'Have you never heard of Abu Ghraib?'
…

Turner: 'Abu Ghraib, no? It's something to look up as a follow up.'[194]

It was clear to everyone in the classroom that my pupils were not giving Turner the answers he was expecting. Little by little, the poet was losing his patience with them. He had asked a generation for whom that war reverberated throughout their early adolescence what images they had of the Iraq war, his war. 'Abu Ghraib' clearly was not one of them. What picture they had were those of 'Jihadi John,' British citizen and IS-warrior beheading his prisoners with a knife on YouTube, symbolising the terror-inspiring rise of the Islamic State. Images of 'Alan Kurdi,' the three-year-old Syrian refugee on the run from civil war and IS, who drowned attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea, a heart-wrenching symbol of the crippling refugee crisis in Europe. Pictures of the dead on the floor of the 'Bataclan' concert hall in Paris made with victims' mobile phones during the attack on November 13, 2015, a watershed moment in European terror attacks. And all the while, the United States was exporting Hollywood images of their military's fight in Iraq and Afghanistan to cinemas globally, with films such as *Restrepo*, *American Sniper* (2014) and *The Hurt Locker*. Portraying the capture and death of Osama Bin Laden, *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) hailed what should have been the end of former president Bush's War on Terror.

So many pictures of war playing their violent film on the retinas of my pupils' collective memory, the poet was frustrated that the one he was hoping for was not amongst them. 'If I'd have asked that question to *Iraqis*, [what images do you have of the Iraq war?], *they* would remember!' the poet said with an exasperation Turner could no longer hide from my pupils.[195] Not being Iraqi, these Dutch teenagers returned his passive aggressive statement with a blank stare. Taking a deep breath, the poet soldiered on.

Turner: 'There's a famous picture of a man in a prison, it's an American prison, who's standing on a box and he has this sack over his head so he can't see. And he's wearing black. He doesn't know, they put electrodes with electrical wires off of his fingertips, but they're not hooked up to anything, but he doesn't know that, you know? He thinks they are… And they have him standing on a box and hold his arms out and he has a bag over his head and it's a very, very striking image, very powerful…like in 2003, how old were you guys?'

Margje: 'Six or something.'
Turner: 'right, right, for you its more historical, you have to go back and do the work to catch up on what happened before. You know what I mean? But like … for Iraqis who lived through that time, that image is the one, you know? We have a whole generation of Iraqi people, several generations, who will live beyond my lifetime, and they'll be in your lifetimes, and you might, at different points in your life you are going to be in contact with them. The point is, embedded in the people you are meeting, there inside of them is this trauma.'[196]

What the poet did not know is that they had met an Iraqi citizen already, and up close: their classmate Sara. As a young girl, Sara lost her father due to a car-bomb and fled war-torn Baghdad at the same time that Brian Turner was posted there as a sergeant in the United States army. Doing well at 'Vwo'-level, having learned to speak Dutch fluently, she had been at school with these pupils for so long and had assimilated so well that their classmates never thought of Sara as a refugee from the Iraq War. The War on Terror, as Nick Mansfield (2006) has shown, 'promises the erasure of the difference between war and peace, and concomitantly, between war and civil society,' and this was an illustrative example. Meeting the veteran in the classroom had foregrounded the stories of future warrior Aagje and former fugitive Sara, even with the latter not present in this particular extra-curricular class. What was still missing in the curriculum at this stage was a chance for all pupils to 'go back and do the work to catch up on what happened before,' to use Turner's own words. Creating testimonies, for example, might facilitate empathy, including as Turner envisioned a better understanding of Iraqis like their fellow pupil Sara, but also of future marines like Aagje.

Diversions Advertency III

'Diversions' is arguably the most elusive of the six tropes of war that Kate McLoughlin offers to understanding the 'decoys' writers of war use. And yet critics argue it is also her biggest addition to the field of war literature studies (Scranton 2013). The story of Abu Ghraib prison written in the Derridean 'margins' of Turner's combat gnostic text was a prime example. The power of the absent in war literature was so strong, in fact, that it enabled my pupils to fill in the hitherto missing story of torture in Iraq. The empty space that Turner had created on the cover of his collection of war poetry allowed my

pupils the freedom to determine both the significance of the absent and the creative opportunity to fill in this empty space individually and collectively. Yet it was becoming progressively clear during class that Turner would not allow them this freedom. He was prone to tell an anti-war, cautionary tale which was not heard, not appreciated, not understood or ignored by my pupils. The war poet is eager not to be part of a particular 'renarrativization' of the Iraq War, to quote a concept by Marita Sturken. He presses upon my pupils that he's no 'John Wayne,' a Hollywood hero saliently synonymous with his alter-ego Sgt. John M. Stryker.[197] Turner pointed a trembling finger at the cover of his poetry collection from which the 'Stryker' vehicle had been violently struck out. With mounting concern in his voice, Turner explains the reason behind his elaborate diversion.

> Turner: 'I didn't want them on there, that was me. Part of it is because it's a John Wayne photo otherwise. But if you know me you know I'm not a John Wayne guy. There were people that took war trophy photos. I think Jackowski was more documenting the moment. He thought it was a strong photo. There was no pride in it. The sandbags on their heads…was a problem.'[198]

The war poet is still struggling with his recurrent feeling of guilt towards being part of an invasion force and the atrocities committed by them. The news of the torture at Abu Ghraib prison, where American soldiers were discovered to subject their Iraqi detainees to 'sadistic, blatant, wanton and criminal abuses,' initially sparked a flood of domestic civil outrage in the United States and Europe alike (Hersch 2004). With the same potential to catalyst protest as the My Lai massacre had proven to be during the Vietnam War, which 'fuelled tensions and anxieties in American society that […] resulted in race riots, feminist protests, counter-cultural withdrawal, mutinies within the armed forces and political assassination,' many feared the Abu Ghraib prison scandal would have similar consequences (Westwell 2006, 58). Yet the world had learned its cynical lesson from Vietnam – 'America was no more moral than other nations – it could still start an unnecessary war, lose it, and commit numerous atrocities along the way' – because the Abu Ghraib prison scandal had no such effect (F. Turner 1996, 14). In fact, it is the killing of Osama Bin Laden that came in third place as the most remembered event in American history, with '9-11' in an unsurprisingly firm first place (Desilver 2014). When Bin Laden

was finally assassinated, 'it was young people who were celebrating in United States' streets (Wagaman 2016), confirming Generation Z to be particularly susceptible to accepting war as a necessary evil.

The extensive 'Photoshop,' as Gerdina put it, to which Turner had subjected the cover of his collection of war poems, was motivated from fear that the original image with its resemblance to Abu Ghraib would put his poetry in a jingoist 'John Wayne' frame. It is another example of 'renarrativization,' the danger of which being 'the slippage between real and fiction, between invention and recovery' (Sturken 1997, 42-43). This is not clear to Turner's teenage audience and here lies a vital opportunity for teachers. The previous chapter has shown that Hollywood war films increasingly picture contemporary warfare as 'essential,' bordering on glorious, including films that rescript traumatic military defeats (Binns 2017, 15). Brian Turner is eager for his poetry to achieve the opposite, which makes war movie *The Hurt Locker* the most salient amongst these, indebted as the film is to Turner's eponymous war poem. The poet has the artistic liberty to delete from history as he pleases and confesses as much in this one-on-one meeting with my post-9-11 generation pupils. A teacher's role is to facilitate students to reclaim the space in the photograph, in the same way they should assist pupils to formulate their own reaction to First World War poetry and the force-fields' tug of war over its legacy. Pupils should be allowed to fill in the 'margins,' as readers and as viewers, and decide for themselves whether the image (or poem) of war inculcates or discourages a glorification of violence, whatever the poet's moral message of warning might be.

'There is nothing strange in this at all,' my increasingly confident and provocative pupil Margje remarked, as she quotes the closing paragraph of Turner's memoir back at him (B. Turner 2015, 201). 'There is nothing remarkable about a dead body in a European War, or a squashed beetle in a cellar', Siegfried Sassoon (1930, 225-6) wrote nearly a century earlier, and thus Margje, by word of the war poets, underscores one of the universal truths about war: it is a bloody business. Arguably, this generation of pupils, more used to war and violence as the backdrop to their young lives than many generations before them, could well be suffering from 'empathy fatigue' (Dean, 2004, 1). 'But war shouldn't be normal!', Hendrik shouted in rebellion against the apparent apathy to violence. 'It should be strange!'[199]

Aagje: 'But it isn't strange, because war is everywhere.'

Hendrik: 'If you start thinking the terrible things you do in war, like those [Turner] describe[s], then you are going downhill as a human being.'
Ferdinand: 'I think war is necessary sometimes. It's been around for a very long time, war is always around us, so for me it is not so strange. I've never seen a war up close, but in the news, it's always war…'
Aagje: 'Maybe the whole thing of war isn't strange to us but the specific things you are describing in your book are, because we are not directly involved in the war.'[200]

My opening statement to classes like Aagje's, 'we are at war,' seemed to be negated by her comment in conversation with the war poet. Narrowing down on the dynamics between war veteran and pupil, what these students were seeking is something hidden in the hurt locker that they felt they could not reach. It was at this climax of meeting the veteran in the classroom that Turner reached a pinnacle of frustration with my pupils. Much like the soldiers of the 'all volunteer army' who went out to Iraq, this generation 'seems already cynical, hardened against idealistic patriotism' (Peebles 2011, 4). And yet at the same time these students seem particularly susceptible to what Luke Turner (2015) describes as 'sincerity, hope, romanticism, affect, and the potential for grand narratives and universal truths'. They fluctuate backwards and forwards 'between sincerity and irony, deconstruction and construction, apathy and affect,' their pendulum swinging from 'a kind of informed naivety,' to 'a pragmatic idealism,' and even 'a moderate fanaticism' (ibid.). In short, the pupils the war poet was addressing with such exasperation were the epitome of a 'meta-modernist' generation.[201] Children born during the 'memory boom' (Huyssen 1995) living in a perpetual age of war, are on the one hand numbed by the violence and apathetic to politics, and on the other ready they are to celebrate Bin Laden's death in the streets and defend their nations. The war poet just could not make sense of these extremities of character.

Turner: 'For me it is strange to have this really gentle conversation about war while this country is conducting war! This country is wealthy enough to wage war and not pay attention to it. It's disturbing.'[202]

Turner's retort uncovers the friction in this class as they discussed politely over coffee whether and when war was necessary, part of the climate they had grown up in, surmising their futures as civilians or soldiers. For my pupils, the terror attacks, 'MH17' and the rise of IS had erased wars' traditional boundaries. Yet it is here where Turner draws a line between the Iraqi desert sand and the Amsterdam city streets. Speaking to teenagers from one of the richest countries in the world, which hadn't seen war in its streets for more than 70 years, this 'gentle conversation' was just too much for Turner. His retort implies my pupils have no idea of the special relationship 'war and space' have (McLoughlin 2011, 83). Logic dictates that 'war is fought over and in space, it alters irrevocably the space on and within which it occurs.' However, this space is 'charged': it is 'as much a product of experience as of geographical factors, transformative, requiring special consciousness'(ibid.). For my pupils, reading his oeuvre and conversing with this witness to the shaping of what they perceived as the violent world they were part of, had brought the battlefield up close. His physical presence in the classroom had 'charged' this moment in time and space, given it the urgency of the warzone, lending my pupils a sense of heightened alertness and significance.

Yet the war poet cannot equate the effect he was having on my pupils in the makeshift classroom with the 'truths' and 'costs' of war he set out to acknowledge in his war memoir:

> I have chambered a round – a NATO cartridge, 5.56mm bullet jacketed in brass. It's a round designed to yaw in soft tissue, and, at the right velocity, to cause hydraulic shock. […] I run with the barrel of my M4 pointing the way forward. Adrenaline mutes the world around me until all I can hear is the sound of my breathing […]. I lift the muzzle of the weapon as I kick the door and I bring it down, eye-level, instinctual, my index finger poised over its trigger.
> (B. Turner 2015, Part 14)

Excerpts like these convey to my pupils a sublime state of hypertension, 'a short-lived feeling of terror and delight, of pleasurable pain' (Binney 2015). These feelings of sublimity, Binney argues, are provoked 'by something vast or infinite' like soldiers

storming into a warzone as Turner does, trigger-finger poised to kill (ibid.). Reading this, my pupils comment they have the idea they have gotten a good feel of the warzone and the adrenaline war can induce, and the veteran's presence in the classroom only serves to heighten this awareness amongst them. Yet herein lies the friction in this classroom situation, for in his efforts to portray the warzone as the 'charged' space that it is, Turner also tries to 'convey that it is not on general access' (cf. McLoughlin 2011, 106). What war writers imply is that their student readers will never really understand what conflict and battle are like, without having experienced it themselves. The real war will never get into the books, as Walt Whitman said. And yet, ironically, writers like Turner are set to convey war's mystery to their readers all the same. It is an eternal catch-22 that writers of war and their readers struggle with. Reading Turner's tales and joining in their laughter and terror, they were 'made to feel the experience of conflict' (McLoughlin 2011, 169). As a result, they were acting with heightened awareness, so different to their behaviour on normal schooldays.

Zones' Urgency IV & War's Duration III

I had experienced an increased vigilance with pupils before, on the yearly field trip to Ypres I had organised for over a decade, and also with Fast Lane English students, visiting the Scottish battlefields of Culloden and Bannockburn. Most intense to date was the field trip following the footsteps of Anne Frank, taking pupils to witness the ending to her story in concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. On these occasions, pupils' 'singular vividness' was palpable, their 'special consciousness' heightened to such an extreme that, empathy overflowing, tears were oftentimes inevitable. 'Kairos' Frank Kermode (1967, 46-47) calls these 'point[s] in time filled with significance, charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end'. Their experiences on these 'sites of memory' and 'mourning' (Jay Winter: 2010) were so intense they left a mark on their minds long after their visit.[203] My pupils' heightened senses caused their perception of time to shift, slowing down and speeding up at once. McLoughlin (2011, 107) explains that 'wartime is twofold: both the duration of a conflict and how time is experienced within it'. I now understood that it was this vigilance, exactly this thrill which is missing in Vietnam War movie course: there is significance, but no 'Kairos,' there is a short charge but nothing to leave a personal mark in their *Bildung*. Visiting 'sites' of war, much like a few hours spent with the veteran in the classroom, time becomes 'charged' for them, filled with new significance.

Yet despite the similarities, there seems to be an unbridgeable rift between what the veterans have experienced and what my pupils fathom to understand but miss. 'Sometimes you wanna fight so bad just to pass the time,' specialist Kyle Steiner says in *Korengal*, the sequel to *Restrepo,* explaining a soldier's desperation at the boredom of his war.[204] This is 'Chronos; the passing or waiting time,' the tedium of hour after hour of waiting filled with military menial tasks (McLoughlin 2011, 107). Though life at school has its dreary moments, it is just not comparable to the deep and significant boredom of soldiers. The 'crack' and 'snap' of the bullet was the 'first thing I heard when I got off the chopper,' it is the 'first thing you hear in a fire-fight.'[205] Though terror-inspiring, the soldiers of *Restrepo* agree, once they have heard that 'crack' there's no way back. McLoughlin (2011, 114) argues that 'a common, if unexpected, feature of warfare […] is boredom'. Bullets incite adrenaline and besides soldiers they kill time. 'Here is the adrenaline rush you crave,' Turner's veteran narrator says alluringly to a bullet like an over-eager puppy in his war poem 'Here, Bullet' (B. Turner 2007a, 29). 'War is a drug,' Bigelow's war movie *The Hurt Locker* opens, 'a potent and often lethal addiction,' Hedges adds (2003, 2-3). The deep boredom of army life results in a deadly craving for action, which as a soldier inevitably means killing and the thrill of the risk of being killed.[206]

This much glossed-over taboo surfaces in the war writing I have put on my curricula. Critics, however, have too often focussed on the supposed 'quasi-pacifist' language of war writing, by poets like Sassoon or Owen, detrimental to creating a myth of war as futile (Winter 2013). 'But his book is boring, Sir!', my pupils invariably complain when they read Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, despite his reputation for being a reckless warrior nicknamed 'Mad-Jack.' Endless army chores, marching and sentry duty: to my pupils' surprise war writing highlights the monotony and automatism of war.[207] If only there were more 'snaps' and 'cracks' of the bullet, I hear my pupils beg. 'Non-witnesses' (Weismann 2004) they are, though not averse to assuming the role of voyeurs of violence. Likewise, seeking their 'magical moments,' pupils selected all the war action Anne Frank's memoir contained. Like the scene where *Jarhead's* bored barrack soldiers work themselves up in a frenzy watching *Apocalypse Now*'s iconic 'Ride of the Valkyries' battle scene, my pupils cheer in equal measure every time they come across examples of violence (Weissman 2004, 4). 'Fighting another human being is not as hard as you think when they're trying to kill you,' Steiner says with a deep sigh in *Korengal*. It is precisely

this 'homicidal background [that] lies at the heart of combatant poetry' and prose which Chris Yates (2010, 91) warns should not be underestimated. It is the one thing that makes meeting a veteran so very exciting for my pupils: they are sitting in a classroom with a killer.

What war induces, in fact, is an addiction to 'Kairos,' points of time filled with 'significance,' a heightened awareness of the senses, the sublimity of the terror of battle, killing and death (Kermode 1967, 46-47). 'It can be argued,' Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien (2015, 77) writes, 'that war is grotesque. But in truth war is also beauty. For all its horror, you can't help but gape at the awful majesty of combat.' Fighting and killing the enemy is the one aspect of Brian Turner's presence that is foremost on my pupils' voyeuristic minds, in their craving to 'learn things they could not know; to be presented with alien circumstances and unguessable emotions' (Yates 2010, 91). Carrying the guilt of '1.2 million' Iraqi deaths with him weighs down heavy on the poet.[208] Coping with the 'Kairos' of killing, 'aggressor' Turner has put these feelings in his 'hurt locker.' This is the flipside of the coin of combat, 'soldiers "turn on" to the visceral excitement of combat in order to "turn off" their troubling emotions' (Peebles 2011, 6). 'Almost more than any other war writer,' Peebles argues, Brian Turner 'appreciates the beauty and history of the country to which he has been sent' (2011, 132-3). It is the war poet's compassion that made his life as a soldier intolerable and his life as a civilian racked with guilt.

This guilt makes the end of war ambiguous for the poet. 'There is culpability in my hands that I can never remove,' Turner writes in his blog 'Mountains over the Moon.' The endings of war are dubitable, for Turner certainly though the body is at peace in the United States, his spirit is still at war. 'The nature of wartime is to withhold any indicators of ending,' McLoughlin (2011, 132) explains, and former President Bush's 'War on Terror' certainly adheres to this dictum. This is a war with no end, as the former soldier is now confronted with some of my pupils' ambition to go fight where he fought before. Retelling the story like he does is a healing act, a wish to move on and as it turns out in this class, a warning for my pupils not to be bold and go where he has gone before: to war. Writing his best-know poem 'The Hurt Locker' and retelling all the 'hurt' of his Iraq War, its blasphemies, 'bullets' and 'pain,' however, Turner is only half-way towards healing (B. Turner 2007a, 21). Reading from his work and talking to my pupils, Turner tentatively opens up the lid to his 'hurt locker.' The poem carries an implicit and impossible warning: eating from this poetic apple containing knowledge of the ultimate mystery of war that

'only an initiated elite knows' (J. Campbell 1999 204), my pupils are advised not to follow the soldier, yet by reading the poem they do follow him and risk falling from grace. The irony is that Turner feels my pupils crave something in the hurt locker, which he wants them not to crave. Yet his credibility in class relies completely on the promise of showing that horror which he so warns against. War's terror is its sublimity, the adrenaline it provides a potent drug. For my pupils, opening the lid to the reality of it is the raison d'être of them being there, 'in the suck' of this tailor-made class.

Tropes Unite: Credentials, Details, Zones, Duration, Diversion & Laughter

And still this tentative opening of Turner's hurt locker does not provide my pupils with the clarity (of war) they crave. Instead, it turns out to be a Pandora's box, infused as Turner's prose is with dreams of war that he claims to have renarrativised (Mahler 2006, 96-102). It will prove hard for my pupils to discern what 'knives and teeth' are real and what 'rough men' that 'come hunting for souls' are not (B. Turner 2007a, 21).

> Turner: 'Memory has changed for me, it's neither fact nor fiction what I live with, I live like this blurry world between the two, you know? […] The event did happen; it's changed and altered over time. I think that's partly why I was writing poems, so I could capture as much as I could while it was still…fresh…'
> Aagje: 'Maybe your memory gets blurry but the fiction you write doesn't get blurry, maybe that's why […] fiction is more true than your memory is.'[209]

Blurring 'the categorizations of nation and ethnicity', the poet tries 'to facilitate simple human awareness' (Peebles 2011, 134). I would argue that Turner does the same with time and place, bending both to form a blurred 'climate of war' (Hynes 1998) where zones of war and peace cease to exist**:** the reality of my post-9-11 pupils' war torn world.

The poet's struggle against opening the lid to the hurt is, as Van der Kolk argues, motivated out of loyalty to the dead.[210] Feelings of survivors' guilt are the prime reason veterans feel prevented from telling their story and thus moving on. Contrarily, guilt is also the force that drives Turner to communicate his Iraq War stories, and more pressingly for the poet, the story of its civilians. 'The old man on the back bench cups his hand around…', Turner reads to my pupils aloud from his memoir (B. Turner 2015, 33), when he looks up to meet their eyes. 'See?' he says, 'suddenly we meet "Zaid" and "Malek,"

and of course this is fiction, right? Or is it? Or is it not?'[211] This might well be another of the veteran's 'diversions.' Naming Iraqi names, the poet is once more establishing his 'credentials' by narrating the 'details' of war. War's interminable 'duration' is still palpable in the trembling tone of Turner's voice, as he communicates best as he can the 'charged' spaces that are of the 'zones' of war, where soldier and civilian, time and place fold into the blurred reality of war's deadly 'hyperlogic.'

This is how Turner successfully rises to the 'specific challenges' of writing about war by applying all of the 'common rhetorical strategies' Kate McLoughlin defines (2011, 16). This chapter shows the extent to which McLoughlin's tropes provide armour for teachers eager to guide pupils past the authorial 'decoys' of conflict when choosing to put war narratives on the curriculum, or even inviting their creators to class. McLoughlin's tropes prove a valuable tool to take the bird's-eye view for teachers seeking to mould their own lessons on war, and, understanding their technical ploys, getting closer to the ways they might be applied in the classroom. That is, if and when teachers can discern their ploys in the text. For as this chapter has shown, some tropes are more elusive ('diversions,' and 'duration') than others ('credentials,' and 'details'), especially on the cognitive level of pupils, which underlines that its primary use is for my teacher-reader. Unravelling the tropes for pupils, therefore, requires the subjective reading of teachers, a time-consuming but potentially rewarding enterprise. Tropes such as 'duration' often remain too theoretically elusive for pupils to understand, and teachers might well be stretched to reignite their potential power in a lesson involving war narratives. Yet my own struggle to make sense of my pupils meeting a veteran in the classroom shows that even one of the most elusive literary decoys of war like 'diversions' can open some unexpected windows unto the world written in the Derridean 'margins' of a war text. I will explain below how this particular struggle lead to a hands-on lucid war literature task for pupils, by which I mean not to create a literal guide, but to inspire teachers to search, discover and discard from this chapter and book for themselves.

Intervention: Blogs of War in the Classroom

'War shouldn't be normal!' Hendrik had peacefully rebelled against the strange lure of war his peers present in the classroom with the war poet felt: 'it should be strange!'[212] Yet no more than a month after their meeting a war veteran, I walked into the room filled with Hendrik and Aagje 's generation reverberating with emotion from the breaking news of

the terrorist attacks in Brussels that morning in March.[213] The irony of the situation was that shortly after the visit of the veteran to the makeshift classroom, I had vowed to integrate war narratives from the Iraq War and the War on Terror into my curriculum. Here was a live war story once again weaving its violent way into my pupils' lives via their mobile phone news feeds. Brian Turner feelings of guilt evoked by his sense of illegal presence as a soldier occupying a foreign land, a country which he had grown to appreciate and love for its beauty and its people, had been made very clear to my pupils on his visit to Amsterdam. Shaken by the poet's appeal to my pupils for empathy with a generation of war-torn Iraqis, I was seeking ways to involve this entire generation of pupils into the larger dialogue on war in our day. With the news of the first bomb exploding in Brussels' Zaventem Airport in 2016, causing consternation amongst my pupils walking into the classroom glued to their mobile phone news feeds, this ambition had gained urgency.

The previous chapters have shown the broad width of narratives through which its poets, filmmakers, memoirists, diarists and novelists report war, to which the soldiers and citizens of Iraq were now adding blogs. 'War has always been ugly and messy,' Peebles (2011, 16) argues, 'but new media have created new windows into this mess.' The 'windows' to war provided by Iraqi citizens during the Iraq War were a catalyst to the development of blogging as a serious media and potentially new literary genre. Amongst the first and most prominent bloggers in the world are Salam Pax (1973–) and Riverbend (date of birth unknown). Pax, a 'firm favourite' amongst bloggers, introduced Riverbend into the online community on his weblog, which was 'being linked to by more sites than any other' (Katz, in Pax 2003, ix). I presumed my 'post-9/11' generation 6th form pupils, citizens all, living in a perpetual 'climate of war' to be especially motivated to read weblog war narratives on wars of their age. This is why I designed an intervention in class, letting my pupils read the war blogs of Salam Pax and Riverbend in print, though online was permitted if and when possible, and comment on them during a short oral exam in pairs of two.

To my great dismay, these exams did not go well at all. My colleagues and I had long since designed oral literature exams loosely based along the format of Cambridge ESOL Examinations. Taking no more than 20 minutes, the majority of the time allocated was geared to pupils speaking to each other about English literature, in this case war blogs by Riverbend and Salam Pax. Having designed the evaluation form to allow no more than

40 percent of the mark to be awarded to language, i.e., the use of English, fluency and pronunciation of these foreign speakers of English, the other 60 percent could go to the quality of the literary discussion. Naturally, those pupils with a high English language level had an easier flow discussing the book or blog they had read with each other. However, the years of test-running this oral literature exam in Fast Lane lessons allowed us to not only fine-tune our exam and evaluation accordingly, but the experience also showed us that putting in the effort to understanding literature and learning to converse intelligently about it, are different skill sets. That morning, having put my classroom ready to receive two students at a time, tables facing each other and myself readied with notebook, timer and recording device ready, I was looking forward to learning how they had experienced and what they had learned reading the Iraqi blogs of war.

Nothing happened. Five minutes into the allocated time for the first exam, and still pupils had not arrived yet. Double checking whether I had gotten the times, date and room right myself, I saw two pupils slowly arriving in the distance. As they turned through the door and silently shuffled into my classroom, I noticed that these were the next two pupils in line. Cutting my losses, I decided to start a little early with this boy and girl instead. They had both read Riverbend and settled into a quiet conversation on her blogs. Five minutes passed into ten, and still the two had not gotten any further than general comments on the Iraqi girl's blogs – 'Riverbend is living in a terrible war, isn't she?' 'Yes, the war in Iraq was very bad for the people there' – and often veering into the personal; 'What would you do if there was a war?' 'Well, I don't think I would write a blog.' Giving them space, I first concluded that their somewhat placid and wafer-thin analysis was due to initial shyness. After ten minutes, however, I quickly concluded that enough ice had been broken, and butted in asking detailed questions on plot; 'a war breaks out with America, and Riverbend starts writing a blog about it,' narrative style; 'it is written like a blog, like a series of emails almost;' the speaker of the narrative; 'Riverbend, a girl who speaks very good English, and its form; 'I do not like blogs, Sir.' Both participants gave halting answers, and it didn't take me long to find out that of the entire collection, neither had read any further than the very first blog.[214]

Pupils that do not do their homework, do not study for their exams, or in some cases, do not read their books is nothing that is shocking to me, my colleagues or any teacher on the planet for that matter. The scale at which these pupils, however, had flatly refused to read these collections of blogs, some of them not even showing up, was higher

than usual. Of course, there were many that had done their work and performed well. But this intervention, the Iraqi Blog task, was meant to be motivational, to capture their imaginations. As it stood, it did the exact opposite. 'But Sir, anyone can write a Blog,' and 'for all we know, these could be all made up,' and 'this war was ages ago, Sir, it doesn't matter anymore,' were amongst the most frequently expressed complaints. Most pupils expressed a wariness, bordering on disinterest with both Pax's and Riverbend's blogs of war. What was wrong, I wondered? Dubbed as the 'Anne Frank' of the Iraq War, Pax was the most popular blogger of his time, even though there were severe doubts amongst his readers as to his true identity and legitimacy as spokesperson for Baghdad's bombed citizens (Katz, in Pax 2003, ix-xiii). My pupils commented that Pax's rendition of the war in his country via TV screens which they themselves also receive at home in the Netherlands (BBC, Al-Jazeera) enforced that impression.

> Friday, 21 March 2003
> The most disturbing news today has come from al-Jazeera. They said that nine B52 bombers have left the airfield in Britain and are flying 'presumably' towards Iraq. As if they would be doing a spin around the block! Anyway, they have six hours to get here.
> […]
> On BBC we are watching scenes of Iraqis surrendering. My youngest cousin is muttering 'What a shame' to himself.
> […]
> We sit in front of the TV with the map of Iraq on our laps.
> […]
> IS SALAM PAX REAL?
> Please stop sending me e-mails asking if I am for real. Don't believe it? Then don't read it. I am not anybody's propaganda ploy – well except my own.
> Two more hours until the B52s get to Iraq.
> Salam 6:05 PM. (Pax 2003, 128-129)

The problem was that blogs like Pax's, as the 'alternative democratic spaces' that they are, discredit what is the first and most important step in capturing pupils' motivation to reading war narratives: authenticity (Gupta 2011, 8). Salam Pax and Riverbend resorted

to a narrative form that was still in its infancy, online and accessible to all. The blog was a medium with which my pupils, as users, could closely identify; yet they were not buying into these civilian blogs of war precisely because of that reason. 'Mak[ing] something happen', to quote Felman (1995, 56), is of vital importance when teaching, as the previous chapters have also underscored, countering Auden's dictum that 'poetry makes nothing happen' (2009, 89). Yet in this instance he was right: nothing was happening in this class. For my pupils reading Pax' blog more than a decade later, his writing lacked immediacy. Ironically, the narrative form it was written in, the blog, further discredited its authenticity, a vitally important aspect to establishing credibility with student readers. After all, they argued, anyone could have written this at any place, any time: including themselves.

What was missing is authenticity, urgency and agency. I had not engaged these pupils with this war, the Iraq war. No link was made between the present and then, too much had I thought the Iraq War of the Bush decade to be synonymous to their day and age as that war amalgamated into their war, the perpetual War on Terror. No contribution, no testimony, like when I had found that reading Anne Frank was an unpopular assignment as well, until I had engaged them by asking them to present their magical moments on a two-weekly basis, and until I told them we were working beyond *The Diary of A Young Girl*, filling in the empty spaces on a road trip via Westerbork to her death in Bergen-Belsen. Too much had I relied on the contemporary form of the blog, winning them over: it did the opposite. Poetry was more popular than prose and blog, its short form lending itself perfectly to classroom use, especially when coupled with the urgency of MH17, the centenary commemoration and debate surrounding the use of poetry to teach about war. Perhaps I had been seduced by the multimodal success of Vietnam War movies, which although lacking in urgency proved a perfect sedative to my class's daily turmoil with each other, pupils gaining some agency when they contributed by presenting their war movie to their boisterous peers.

In short, I had neglected to sufficiently engage their reading motivation by supporting students' autonomy, activating their intrinsic interests and addressing their social motivation (Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends 2017). Voicing their critique unabashedly were the pupils who had joined me in Amsterdam, their confidence ever growing since their meeting war poet Brian Turner, Aagje foremost amongst them. The veteran's autopsy had enticed them into his narrative, the 'zone' of war, keeping them

spellbound by the author's successful technique of 'details' and 'diversions' (McLoughlin 2011). Turner had opened his 'hurt locker' for pupils to take a peek, yet ultimately sealed the lid to these citizens. Aagje and her classmates are thus never able to become part of the 'cult of the soldier poet' (van Wienen 2002, 7-8), unless they experience war: the Catch-22 of successful war writing. This irked my pupils, rallying behind their Aagje most of all, for her very real ambition to join the army gave her credibility that broke down the barrier Turner put up whenever they got too close. They want to be shocked and 'shaken', contrary to what Fussell claimed (2013); they crave for the secret knowledge Turner has of war, even if this includes pain and suffering.

Furthermore, they felt Turner had diverted them from the truth of war by his Photoshop omission of the John Wayne scene: guarding kneeling and hooded Iraqi prisoners. 'Civilians caught up in wartime suffer the world over,' Turner writes in his blog 'Mountains over the Moon'. 'I have passed by so many on the streets of Baghdad and the streets of Mosul. I wonder where they are now?' the veteran wonders (B. Turner 2007b). My pupils had one of the answers to Turner's question ready: in the picture the poet chose to delete them from, McLoughlin's elusive trope 'diversion' at play. The sublimity of the diversion was that deleting the cruelty and reality of war from the photograph had had an opposite effect: the Iraqi prisoners were foregrounded in the memory of my pupils' minds forever. It was then that I realised what was the second answer to Turner's rhetorical question, and the great mistake I had made. War entered the classroom every day, not just via newsfeeds and literature: this class like many at my school had refugees in its midst, as well as the future soldiers of future battlefields that created their refugee status. Despite realising that war texts allow space in the Derridean margins of the text for pupils to create their own story, I had not facilitated my pupils to reclaim that space myself.

I realised what the limits of the tailor-made class had been: it was a stand-alone experience, one not shared within the school's broader community. 'Education serves both individual and public, societal interests,' the Dutch Educational Council concluded in their report, arguing that tailoring too much to pupils' individual needs puts social coherence and equality at risk. Guiding them past the authorial 'decoys' of Turner's narratives, they went through what Felman (1995) terms a 'crisis,' in this case of being 'in the suck' together. Walking away from that experience, I realised what was missing: the 'performative' act of testimony (Felman 1995). For here they were in class together, those who had met a war veteran, those who had fled from war themselves and those who

wished to join the war. Together, they lived through times marked by terror attacks and reading blogs by young and civilian writers impassioned them to want to create their own testimonies and open up their own potential hurt lockers. The creative writing task I designed from this urgent need, in a bid to return the loss of immediacy and of relevance they felt upon reading from Pax and Riverbend's blogs. In fact, creating their own poetry was a form of creative writing too, which I had applied with great success in my bid to achieve a sense of urgency and agency with my pupils vis-à-vis the literature curriculum: writing their testimonies. Eager to foreground their own experience, their own 'crisis' as it were, I intervened, asking them to respond to Riverbend and Pax by writing their own war blogs, 'Filling the Empty Spaces of War' as I called the task.

> In 2003, when I was six years old, the invasion of Iraq by a United States led coalition started. […] I remember people dancing in the streets, all happy and optimistic, welcoming the United States army. […] Now, 13 years later, the situation in Iraq has become even worse. This war has destroyed our beautiful country and civilization. […] Iraqi children have seen things a European child will never see. War has a great impact on a child's memory. A child will never forget the horrific events of war. […] The world that our parents have known is no longer the same. […] We have to wake up and make the difference.[215]

It had taken six years for one of my refugee pupils Sara, to write her blog of war, for her school and its teachers, of whom I was one, to find a way to foreground her story and weave it into the collective consciousness of the generation of Dutch pupils she was now part of. From them, a rag-tag band of pupils had found their unique ways into the charged space that meeting a veteran of war had been, bringing them as close as they could to the reality of war. Brian Turner, however, had drawn a firm line in the sand between his experiences in the Iraqi desert and the peaceful streets of Northern Holland. Yet my pupils were consciously crossing that border between peace and war and purposefully stepping into no man's land.

> After that day at school, I was trying to get back home when two shells were thrown a couple of hundred metres where I was walking, suddenly

> everyone was running, the area was getting attacked, a bomb exploded, bullets all over the place, you name it.
>
> Everything was just going so fast…
>
> And as I was running and trying to hide, I saw a girl held by her father who was screaming and crying, the head of his daughter and part of her shoulder were almost separated from her innocent body because of a bomb that exploded nearby. [To] this day the dream of that man holding the dead body of his daughter still hunts me down.[216]

It was the 'performative act' that I had been seeking which would make Pax' and Riverbend's blogs relevant to my pupils' lives as well as foreground their experience as refugees, and thus weave their memory into the collective memory of her generation (Felman 1995, 56). For education, Felman (ibid.) argues, should not be interested in 'new information' but rather in the way pupils 'transform themselves in function of the newness of that information.' My refugee pupils' blogs above were a case in point. More than any other form, blogs allow the 'intertwining of the process of writing with the process of reading,' that allows it to become the 'dynamic communicative space' that it is (Gupta 2011, 177-8). Formerly interpreted as its great disadvantage, letting pupils react to Riverbend and Pax in their own way is now turned around to their advantage. Intrinsically and socially motivated as they were to learn about their classmates' war, my pupils were given fresh stimulation to read Pax's blogs in a different light by mirroring them with their classmates and their own creative writing. Adapting the goals of command to broaden the reactions to war in our day, I asked every student in this class to write their own war blog, addressing their individual autonomy within the group, thus completing the four motivational pillars set out by Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends (2017, 3-13).

> I really enjoyed meeting Turner, just as I enjoyed reading Sassoon and Owen and visiting Ypres. But I don't see why that should mean I shouldn't join the army myself. I really want to join the marines. For the camaraderie, for the sense of belonging, a miniature society. I want to see the world and do the right thing, helping people. I think I will be quite safe though I want to experience war as well. Yes, of course, the adventure.[217]

This was the legacy of a visit to the classroom of a war poet, memoirist and veteran of the Iraq War, bringing both the smell of war's blood into the Dutch classroom and the sweat of future soldiers like Aagje wishing to quench it. At the time of writing it is the year 2020, and some years later I have had the chance to fine-tune the otherwise fluid war blogging task. Ever since Brian Turner's presence in the classrooms charged that place, bringing the energy of the warzone with him, making my pupils vigilant, the effect of foregrounding refugee blogs in the classroom has had a similar effect. Having refugees share their blogs of war with their Dutch classmates, which offered the latter a unique window into the direct effect of the war-torn world this post-9/11 generation had lived in all their lives. These blogs created a way for pupils to empathise with each other: citizens, refugees and would-be warriors in a war-torn world. This assignment ensured that no Dutch pupil was behind, by blogging their stories of war that have the 'ability…to produce empathy and social responsibility' in the classroom, creating 'alliances that transcend race, class and gender' (Landsberg 2004, 21). Together, these stories form a collective tapestry, a larger story of a generation breaking with Dutch education's one-size-fits-all approach, making their individual stories of war measure in the classroom.

Something was definitely happening now. Sharing their blogs in a variety of ways, online, turning them into vlogs, presenting them in class, printing them for reading, the task had come alive. There is a 'suggestive power of the absent' in war literature which makes my pupils 'free to enlarge the significance of incomplete information' (McLoughlin 2011, 22). Creative writing at its best, the refugee war blogs now surfaced like a phoenix from the ashes of their war and into the collective memory of a Dutch classroom. An unexpected yet welcome legacy of a visit by an American soldier poet to a select group of Dutch secondary school pupils. Kate McLoughlin's tropes of war had helped unearth a huge literary diversion, created by the poet's feelings of guilt and culpability towards the country he had helped occupy. Giving pupils the chance to create their own testimonies, they had finally been able to 'catch up on what happened before,' foregrounding the story of their classmate Sara and her memory of war-torn Iraq. Yet my pupils went beyond the poet's politics, prying open the hurt locker of war in their wish to experience the violence and excitement for themselves. Thus, the effect of the visit of a veteran to the classroom of a secondary school class in a small town in Northern Holland was the collective opening of their hurt lockers, uncovering both their experience of war as their wish to experience

the violent. Writing their war stories, they took charge of their own educational process, their pasts and their futures.

Our country had been attacked, and as a wartime President, [President George W. Bush] received casualty reports every day from the front lines. His thoughts were with the troops on the battlefield, the families of the fallen, and the wounded warriors in hospitals all around the world. Art was the last thing on my husband's mind.
(Laura Bush 2017, 9)

Wars don't end. They never remain in the past.
(Michael Ondaatje 2018, 212)

Concluding War in the Classroom

"We…are…at…war." Words I had spoken at the start of each schoolyear ever since the dark summer of the downing of flight MH17, and in the midst of the centenary remembrance years 2014-2018. And every single semester since the start of my research and this book, the alarm in the eyes of the secondary school pupils in front of me burned a little more. This term, however, there was something in the air.[218] "I'm sorry sir, but this is nothing new," Bertus commented after I pointed it out to this year's sixth form A-level exam-class that we are at present in the middle of a 'memory boom' (Huyssen 1995) during which 'anniversaries are given a hard sell' (Brearton 2014). His classmates agreed, the fire in their eyes dying. "Of course we live in a 'climate of war' sir," Ceylin added, "we know that." More than ever Samuel Hynes's (1998) words rang true with teenagers like Bertus and Ceylin, the latter having fled the streets of war-torn Aleppo some years before. For all the experience and expertise I had garnered during the course of composing this book, I was momentarily dumbstruck. A flickering of fear resurfaced that I had not felt since being asked by the former Dutch Secretary of State for Education to address the anxiety teachers feel when faced with the challenge of putting war and the Holocaust on the curriculum, a political appeal that had kickstarted my research. I had spent several years designing and applying a wide variety of multimodal literary interventions in the secondary school classroom, ranging from firing at the canon of World War I literature, finding Anne Frank beyond her diary, directing scenes of Vietnam War movies and filling in the empty spaces of the Iraq Wars and blogs from the War on Terror. Having proven effective weapons for teachers eager to address their anxiety and bite the bullet, would these now turn out barren?

Stoically continuing the lesson, I grabbed for the literary armour I had become skilled to apply in this battle, which by now my reader will have grown familiar with, and handed two Poet Laureate war poems to this fresh batch of pupils. Reading quietly along with me as I read out loud, flying into 'someone else's web of war' (Vegter 2014) my pupils listened to the poetry that 'could tell it backwards,' its shrapnel scything them to 'the stinking mud' (Duffy 2013b) of war. As the wickedness of war seeped into the classroom, I could see the effect in my students' eyes, burning with a fire rekindled. I breathed a sigh of relief. These Warburgian 'pathos formula' war poems I had put on my curriculum since the start of my research had not lost its power over its student readers. These narratives have the 'power to trigger memories,' to cite Aby M. Warburg (1866-1929), quoted in Erll (2011, 19). These 'pathos formula' war narratives 'help us to see backward and forward in time' (Johnson 2012, 18), making the memory war come alive in the classroom, and simultaneously flashing forward in time as a metaphor for current experiences of war.

Using Warburg's theory, this book has shown how teachers can empower war narratives beyond their form, embedding them in the curricula of the 21st-century classroom via a variety of innovative literary interventions, and in doing so defining, maintaining and preserving memory. Though these literary interventions are purely qualitative, I had the benefit of experiencing the effect of these cultural energy stores in the classroom as I watched how, once again, they drove my pupils into a state of heightened awareness. Poised and receptive, the experienced teacher-reader will instantly confirm that however quantitatively immeasurable this educational condition is, it is the ideal situation to find a class in. "I can't go there again," Alberta suddenly exclaimed. For Alberta, having been forced to re-sit the exam-year, the field trip to Ypres the year before triggered a violent 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg 2004), as 'nonwitness' (Weissman 2004) to the event of trench warfare. Like the group of pupils who had travelled to Bergen-Belsen with me, my book has shown this effect is not uncommon. "It's just too sad, sir…," she said tremulously. "'The past is just the same – and War's a bloody game… Have you forgotten yet?'" Alberta read out Siegfried Sassoon's (1983a) warning words of 'combat gnosticism' (Campbell 1999) to her class, with more than a quaver of anger in her voice.

I am aware that drawing general conclusions from my qualitative research will raise immediate questions with regards to their quantitative measurability. Recent quantitative research into the effects on pupils reading skills when applying literary task

have shown how difficult it is to extract clear results (Elisabeth Lehrner – te Lindert, 2020). The effects of my (war) literature interventions further bolster my choice for a qualitative approach, the results of which are the more remarkable given the difficulty in measuring effect in the literature classroom. Therefore, from the conclusions of this book I would like to draw an invitation to future teacher-researchers like myself to perform more exacting quantitative research my literary interventions deserve.

Meanwhile, although Alberta had clearly not 'forgotten yet,' shuddering at the thought of a return to the ancient battlefields, "when are we going, sir?" was the question Ceylin, Bertus and their classmates asked with undisguised eagerness. If anything, Alberta's dread had served to heighten her classmates' appetites for war, adding to the impending Ypres trip a forbidden allure. Alberta's prosthetic memory of war contrasted with Ceylin's very real memory of war. Yet the latter pupil Ceylin, a refugee of war, was as eager as the Dutch students around her to visit the former battlefields that so upset the former pupil, her Ypres seasoned classmate Alberta. Force-fields eager to prove war literature to have a 'quasi-pacifist' (Winter 2013) effect on a society's culture and its pupils will by now be disappointed by this book. I have shown that the demands of society, politics and science on education are both urgent and exceptional. The legacy and future of teaching literature in the classroom are at the heart of the controversy: the force fields of science, politics and society are agreed that war needs to be addressed in the classroom but are critical of the supposed anti-war literature that teachers have put on their curricula to do so.

Yet if there is one thing the literary interventions in this book have consistently shown, it is that the effect of a so-called anti-war poem or anti-war movie, or even the visit of an anti-war veteran in the classroom, is inconsistent. Pupils are repelled by war at least as much as they have shown a mysterious hunger to get up as close as they can to it. Their craving for something in the hurt locker upon meeting a veteran; their want to become a non-witness of Bergen-Belsen and Ypres; the lure of violent magical moments in war narratives such as *The Diary*; their blind acceptance of 'combat gnosticism's' authenticity, especially problematic in their Vietnam War movie violent scenes of choice. In short, students' engagement with war narratives in the 21st-century classroom prevents war as much as it inculcates it.

War will 'remain a major feature of today's world,' as Graham Galer argues (2008, 6), and 'new myths will continue to develop from the different experiences they create.'

This is why the force fields understandably seek out the last stronghold of collective memory and bastion of shared culture to society to establish calm control in and of a conflicting world: schools. As I have shown, the war narratives from subsequent 20th- and 21st-century wars reveal a contradictory relationship to warfare, with its readership as well as its authors. This is why what I suggest in this book is a literature curriculum which 'reads against the grain,' (Benjamin cited in Erll 2011, 22): engaging pupils with 20th and 21st century wars, the societal, political and scientific polemics these inspire by putting a wide variety of multimodal war narratives on the curriculum, visiting sites of memory and mourning and inviting a veteran to the classroom. Applied in classes like Alberta and Ceylin's, filled with pupils of all denominations and political preferences, literature provides the educational anchors for teachers to become the authorities on memory that they are, engaging pupils and providing a platform for both their abhorrence of and attraction to violence. It is not a teacher's role to measure the validity of students' lasting individual change which a visit to a site of memory and mourning inspires, or the lasting literary testimonies of violence, war and Holocaust pupils create. Rather, it is the teacher's responsibility to address a difficult topic such as war and Holocaust in their education today, and this book suggests they may use literature to do so. Whatever literary thematic road a teacher chooses to take applying literature in the classroom, pupils, on their part, are so-called '*Bildungsreisende*' (Thomas Mann 1999, 728). They have the responsibility to engage critically with what their expert teacher guides have put upon their paths to becoming confident, versatile, critically and democratically engaged citizens, whatever their political agendas and personal preferences.

Back in the classroom, misinterpreting their first reaction to the war literature course as disaffection, this latest platoon of pupils of Generation Z turned out to be veterans of war in education. The qualitative path I had chosen, the risk I had taken as a scholar and teacher, as a literary historian and educational critic, is truly innovative and has led me beyond the remit of an English teacher, tackling a Dutch canonical narrative, exploring multimodal genres, from war poetry to prose, movies and blogs, beyond the limits of my classroom from the Allard Pierson to Ypres, from Bergen-Belsen to a veteran in the classroom. This generation I had in front of me now had experienced many of the literary interventions in this book, right from the moment of their Classics field trip to Amsterdam, until this moment and their impending field trip to Ypres. They were more aware of the influence of politics, society and science on the way wars are remembered

and the way we write, fight and commemorate present wars than previous pupils had been. The hitherto non-existent literary interventions with which this generation has engaged have shown that literature can establish gateways to citizenship, develop individual *Bildung* and create empathy with pupils in the language classroom.

Moreover, Bertus and Ceylin's primary reaction uncovered another aspect to pupils' growing awareness of living in a 'climate of war:' their lack of innocence. No shock and awe for these teenagers, as Jupiter hurled his lighting 'across a clear blue sky,' in the words of Seamus Heaney (1939-2013), in New York in September 2001. For this generation in front of me was the first to carry the trauma of 9-11 in their bloodlines, a collective memory written in their DNA.[219] For them the war of retaliation in the Middle East was a perpetual media feature, aerial bombardments a dark TV-décor for more than a decade of their lives. Another fell swoop of 'stropped-beak Fortune' across the clear blue skies of their childhood, 'making the air gasp' (Heaney 2004) was the downing of the aeroplane filled with fellow countrymen: the 'MH17.' Its 5-year commemoration that summer occasioned Dutch prime-minister Mark Rutte to draw upon yet another (war) poem, Bert Schierbeek's (1973) "I think," demanding of its listener the Descartian answer *ergo sum*; therefore I am.

> I think
> when it rains
> don't let her get wet
>
> and when it storms
> she won't catch cold.

Schierbeek reiterates Rupert Brooke's (2014) 'pulse in the eternal mind.'[220] The (war) dead live on in my pupils' living thoughts and thus remain alive, whilst crises of climate and conflict beat upon the graves of the dead, no longer tormenting them as they do the mourning living.

This study has shown that literature is a key weapon in addressing societal, political and academic concerns, in this case war in the classroom. The progress of my research itself has allowed me as a teacher to attain an academic bird's-eye view of the processes in the classroom, whilst simultaneously drawing from my extensive experience

in the everyday battle of teaching teenagers. The conclusions I may now draw from my years of experience as a scholar and a teacher bring these conflicting worlds together, making me aware that my students and I were also at the helm of defining the memory of war, myself by my choice of war narratives for the curriculum, my pupils by their narrative preferences. Consistently applying my research to the classroom on the go, I analysed the initial disaffected reaction of this latest batch of recruits I was teaching at the moment of writing and mirrored it with the available academic critique. The Schierbeek intervention emulates my very first, when I addressed the downing of flight MH17 in class by putting Dutch poet Laureate Vegter's poem 'MH17' on the curriculum, which triggered their memory and emotion considerably, and readied them for engagement with Siegfried Sassoon's poetic question, asking my war-bent pupils a question about the realities of war: 'have you forgotten yet?' Broadening the English literature curriculum to include Dutch poetry allows for much needed cross-curricular cooperation in education, besides showing that the interventions in this book may easily apply to other languages, as well as subjects such as History.

Furthermore, the wide variety of literary interventions in this book has shown that when teachers connect literature to current affairs, like Schierbeek and Sassoon's poems to the commemoration of flight-MH17, it establishes agency with pupils to engage with any academic, societal or political urgency at hand. These pupils were not suffering from 'empathy fatigue' (Dean 2004), these war poems had not been reduced to 'memorable epigrams' (Rawlinson 2007), 'sapp[ed] of their power' (Kendall, 2013) and neither had they or did they read them 'slackly' (Graham 1984), as academics suspect is the effect of over-familiarity with war narratives in the classroom. Here was the first generation of Dutch A-level pupils to have experienced a wide range of literary interventions of conflict, the first in my experience needing no introduction to Wilfred Owen. These pupils showed a resolve and resilience to engage with the political, societal and scientific polemics that this war literature carried in its wake, welcoming pathos formula poets such as British Sassoon and Dutch Schierbeek to their collective memories, eager as any other to go out and become as close a 'nonwitness' to war as they possibly could.

These are the first contours of the long-lasting effects of teaching war literature in the classroom. Yet given the differing reactions in class, varying from Ceylin's to Alberta's, it is impossible to measure an exact, defining or uniform group effect. I do, however, want to argue here that on the basis of teaching the literary interventions in the classroom as I

have outlined in this book, with every single generation leading up to Bertus and Ceylin's class, I experienced an ever more maturing sense of literary language awareness amongst my pupils. Future (teacher-)scholars are invited to measure more exacting readings from the interventions in this book, regarding for instance pupils' expanded language levels, their heightened awareness of the influence of the force fields upon their (literary) school curricula, their increased literary skills and motivation. For now, I invite my teacher-readers to continue to trust upon the delicate balance between research and experience which has allowed the previous chapters and its literary interventions to come to fruition.

As I have shown, enabling students to participate by creating their own (literary) reactions, be they in the form of poetry, film, blogs or presentations, plays a vital part in that process, whatever its individual effect on pupils. A literary curriculum which gives concrete tools for teachers to address their anxieties with regard to teaching the most difficult topics, treading with tender footsteps into the memory of Holocaust and war, has fulfilled its primary goal. Doing so is a double-edged sword; facilitating a permanent awareness in both pupils and teachers with regard to the cultural memory of war and the roles both play in that heavily contended no-man's land.

The core advice of this book to the force-fields is to start trusting teachers. The core advice to teachers is to start redesigning the curriculum in the broadest sense. The focus of this book is war, but new designs may easily focus on different urgent, current affairs and societal concerns such as racism, women's rights, or the environment, for instance. I invite teachers to draw from these literary interventions, to design their own and make them the backbone of their curriculum, engaging pupils in their design and especially in the end-result. It is advised to measure the task design like those outlined in this book, to the PETALL definition of excellence, 'a mutual understanding and awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity through ICT-based [tasks] that travel well, securing the quality of the communicative exchange across cultural and geographic divides,' notwithstanding the four motivational pillars set out by Van Steensel, Van der Sande, and Arends (2017, 3-13) I have outlined and applied previously.[221]

As the chapters have shown, these tasks in turn allow gateways to citizenship and contribute significantly to pupils' *Bildung*, whilst at the same time facilitating a more central role for literature and reading, a skill that has been losing steady ground at both secondary and primary schools. As a teacher-scholar, I am well aware that the interventions I have outlined in this book are well beyond the daily remit of language

teachers' means, their time, and core goals of state-imposed curriculum content, a reason why, as Lehrner-te Lindert (2020) underscores, language teachers shy away from task design. Yet at the same time, I am convinced that designing up-to-date, multimodal literature programs, which tackle at least a selection of the diverse questions the force-fields pose for education, lies within most teachers' ambition, given time, given means. This book, therefore, wants to conclude with a strong advice to the force-field of Politics, the (Dutch) Ministry of Education specifically: to give teachers this much needed time and provide teachers with these much-needed means.

Every single literary intervention I designed in the course of writing this book coincided with commemoration and calamity, and this year was no exception. It is a cynical truth that with regard to educating pupils on war and Holocaust, calamity and conflict will continue to play a big part in humanity's future. For tucked away in every pupil's breast-pocket is a phone that will continue to push daily narratives of conflict into their lives, the poetry, films, blogs and songs of the wars we continue to wage, celebrate, and commemorate. This book shows how teachers need to hold on to these moments when they occur and connect it to canonical and non-canonical multimodal literature in their classrooms. Combining three roles at all times, McLoughlin as method in hand (literary historian), armed with Biesta to fuel my educational vision (educational theorist), and with the daily practice to intervene in (teacher), my teacher-reader has followed me through the chapters of my exploratory quest to propose how the literature curriculum ought to be renewed at Dutch secondary schools and beyond. Taking 'the beautiful risk' (Biesta, 2013), my qualitative approach has led to the design of a wide variety of multimodal literature curricula with a series of interventions or tasks at their core, to provide temporal anchors to address war in the classroom. These I have marked out clearly for the benefit of time-pressed teachers to draw upon in their ambition to establish similar versatile, multimodal and up-to-date literature curricula themselves, perhaps outside the language boundary of English and outside the thematic boundary of war, in a bid to address the concerns of science, politics and society today.

The first, tentative and intuitive step in the classroom I made was to involve the downing of flight-MH17 in the classroom, by putting Vegter and Sassoon's poems on the curriculum, and to connect these with the centenary commemoration of World War I and pinpointing to my pupils that they are currently living in what Huyssen (1995) calls a 'memory boom.' The initial success of these lessons, sparking off a reengagement with

current affairs and literature, fuelled my wish to delve back into the academic archive to broaden my outdated literary curriculum and in doing so formulate answers to the force-fields' most urgent concerns. With flight-MH17 more and more part of commemoration rather that actuality, a different pathos formula can be resorted to regain the urgency in the classroom: Schierbeek's 'I think', for instance. Realising the power of pathos formula literature to provide the ideal gateway tools to lessons on citizenship, value driven education with a specific focus on conflict, I used McLoughlin's tropes and Biesta's educational vision to arm myself with, in a literary historical analysis of World War I poetry, its potential in the 21st century classroom and its contribution to the invention of tradition. The detailed analysis of the history of anthologising World War I poetry has shown that education has left a defining mark on what we regard as the canon and continues to wield the power to do so. This led to the realisation of the following interventions:

1. **Songs of War**
2. **Refugee Poetry**
3. **The Battle for Authenticity**
4. **One Poem for All Wars**
5. **Adopt a War Poem**

These interventions foregrounded the necessity of including pupils in curriculum design. Literature certainly can facilitate answers to the force-fields' concerns. However, these answers might well be different from what the force-fields expected. For students' engagement with war poetry has shown that 'it remains unclear whether war sweetens the study of poetry or vice versa' (Rawlinson 2007, 116). Pupils' involvement in broadening the canon showed they mostly succumb to the so-called authenticity of the veteran poets, as foregrounded by McLoughlin's tropes of war, which was thus proving useful for literature teachers when applied as a tool to understand the dynamics of the literary interventions in the classroom.

Firmly embedded in education, next to the war poetry of Wilfred Owen, is Anne Frank's war diary. Drawing from my research and experience in chapter two, in chapter three I ventured to outline how this 'pathos formula' war narrative, written by a war gnostic girl amongst 'combat gnostic' men, has moved and might still move beyond its

time and form in the classroom. McLoughlin states that 'it now seems evident that the First World War's natural form was the lyric poem, that the Second World War's was the epic novel, that the Vietnam War's was the movie, that the Iraq Wars' may well turn out to be the blog' (2011, 10). With each chapter in this book foregrounding these narratives and wars in turn, whether or not it could be argued that a war diary written by a child belongs to McLoughlin's category 'epic novel' is beyond the point of my research. What is important is that *The Diary*, much like the war poetry of Sassoon and Owen, is a crucial and dominant text in the broad width of available literatures on the Holocaust, especially in education. I wanted to use my position as a scholar amongst teachers to further open the archive of (children's) war literature and establish interventions and links with the adult. My previous experience in designing literature tasks for Fast Lane English on the road in Scotland had grounded my conviction that many opportunities for re-writing the potentiality of literature's power in the classroom lie outside the classroom. Selecting from this experience a group of high-achieving Vwo-pupils, I established an extra-curricular lesson series with two interventions at its core:

6. **One broad in-class intervention: Selecting *The Diary*'s Magical Moments**
7. **One broad out-of-class intervention: Finding Anne Frank, divided into separate school-trip Stopping Points:**
    (a) Out-of-class Intervention Stopping Point I: Westerbork
    (b) Out-of-class Intervention Stopping Point II: The Road to Liberation
    (c) Out-of-class Intervention Stopping Point III: In a German Wood
    (d) Out-of-class Intervention Stopping Point IV: Anne Frank Platz

This group of pupils' renewed introduction to *The Diary* was fraught with the pitfalls of pupils' resistance and lack of motivation. Yet allowing pupils to rediscover and reappraise the canonical war narrative themselves, the so-called magical moments, and discussing this in peer-to-peer group sessions, strengthened pupils' autonomy, activated their intrinsic interests and addressed their social motivation (Van Steensel, Van der Sande and Arends 2017). Chapter three has shown that the equivocal distinctions between adult war literature and children's war literature are blurred: adult Holocaust literature and spatial narrative of a Nazi concentration camp enable this children's narrative to be reappraised and give voice to the pages that have been left blank. The ideals of children's narratives

don't stick. It is the 'ur-terror' adults tend to 'pussyfoot' around, quoting Lore Segal, which attracts and lures teenagers, making a lasting mark upon their memories. It is the 'ur-terror' of Owen's gas-attack in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' as well as the deeply imbedded terror of *The Diary* uncovered via the in-class-intervention I had set them: my pupils' selected magical moments. The end product of the out-of-class interventions, a short film-diary ending to *The Diary* documenting their own eastward journey and visit to Bergen-Belsen, created a 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg 2004) with my pupils, shining a permanent light on *The Diary's* ultimate blind spot: the annihilation of the annexe inhabitants during the Holocaust.

Back from Bergen-Belsen in the everyday classroom, and an educational tier down from Vwo, there was no literary field trip or extensive literature course (First World War poetry) in curricular view for the Havo class I was teaching that year. Rather, with a year of ploughing through English grammar and preparing for their reading exam ahead of them, it was no surprise that both their language and motivation levels were lower than their peers at Vwo. What is more, the Paris attacks where having a ripple-effect in this class already at loggerheads with each other: they were now in turmoil. It explained why the appeal to education to formulate answers to crises and gain a certain control on calamity are urgent. The boundaries between the zones of war and peace were getting more and more blurred in my pupils' lives, and I wanted to research the further possibilities multimodal war narratives gave them to understanding the present. By rebelling as they did in my class, these pupils were implicitly pleading for '*Bildung.*' The literary intervention at the core of my response in the classroom, therefore, needed to act as flywheel to address the 'mental-segregation' (Kleijwegt 2016) prevalent in my current Havo-class head on. This is why I chose the most direct visual confrontation with violence and conflict possible: war movies. Moreover, movies have proven a popular form of choice with pupils, especially with cognitively and culturally diverse Havo-classes. Because economic backgrounds differ just as widely, choosing film got pupils as closely as they could to seeing a battlefield as their peers in Vwo. I meant to offer a low budget and broadly applicable educational literary intervention to my teacher-reader. Again, like any and all literary interventions and their choices of form, the Vietnam War movie is as thematically interchangeable as (war) poetry, (war) prose and (war) blogs.

Designing the intervention for Chapter four, I based myself on the Willis approach in task-based learning theory. The Vietnam war movie intervention I presented to class

as one whole task in three separate parts: 'pre-task,' raising consciousness activities, 'during-task' and 'post-task,' reflective and focussed communication activities (Ellis, Skehan, Natsuko, Li and Lambert 2020, 365):

8. Intervention: Directing Scenes of War

(e) Part I: Introducing images of war in class

(f) Part II: Critical engagement with Vietnam War movies

(g) Part III: Pupils directing scenes of war

The Havo pupils, raised in a post-9-11 world, in an age where teaching must 'testify' (Felman 1995), were unaccustomed to an innovative literary and visual curriculum like this, with clear links to citizenship. The intervention had made 'something happen:' these troublesome teenagers had started to engage (Felman 1995). The Vietnam War movie course had offered extra-curricular possibilities, opening up the English literature curriculum to (war) movies, and established gateways to citizenship and *Bildung*. Directing their scenes of war in class, my Dutch pupils showed that all 'four cycles' (Westwell 2006) of Vietnam movies ultimately bring to the screen the universal essence of what war is about. Their scenes of choice, much like the magical moment selected by their Vwo-peers, showed an equal fascination with violence. It brings into a different light the notion of an anti-war movie. Like anti-war poetry, it suggests the force-fields believe literature can sway public opinion. Given the fact that McLoughlin's theory had helped to show me as a teacher that visual war narratives had a particular power over my pupils, beguiled as they were with this genre's enticing form of mediated autopsy, this might well turn out to be true, though in what way is open to debate. Once more, watching (anti-)war movies might well prove to inculcate war as much as prevent it.

Despite the benefits of the multimodal Vietnam war movie curriculum, opening gateways to citizenship to a wide variety of pupils with differing cognitive, social, ethnic and economic backgrounds, there had been something missing. The passionate student output of an interview with a Vietnam veteran showed me what: facilitating an extra-curricular event such as this, like visiting a site of memory and mourning, sparks off an invaluable lasting memory and creates a living pupil testimony. Combined with pupils' unremitting thirst for the secrets of war, they had pried open the hurt locker by their analyses and composition of war poems, their exacting reading of a war diary, their

foregrounding of film scenes of war, and their visits to sites of memory and mourning. Inviting a veteran to the classroom would foreground these dynamics once more. The legacy of a visit to the classroom of a war poet, memoirist and veteran of the Iraq War, was to bring both the smell of war's blood into the Dutch classroom as well as the sweat of future soldiers like Aagje wishing to quench it. Chapter five has shown that the literature class where my pupils were to meet a war veteran was an inclusive one. It established intergenerational empathy within the Dutch classroom between pupils that were not just torn apart by different racial and social backgrounds, but by a cruel Dutch system of early selection. Yet the limits of the tailor-made class had been that it was a stand-alone experience, one not shared within the school's broader community, though naturally by writing this book and listing my literary interventions here in conclusion, I share them with the teaching world. Chapter five, therefore, foregrounded the design of two interventions instead of one:

9. **Veteran in the Classroom**
10. **Blogs of War in the Classroom**

(h) Filling the Empty Spaces of War

Aiming to provide my teacher-readers with a hands-on analytical tool for a class involved with (writers of) war narratives, I have presented a structured and detailed use of McLoughlin's (2011) tropes of war upon meeting a veteran in the classroom, aware as I was that the practical outcome of applying these in class had been slightly haphazard. Some tropes prove more elusive ('diversions,' and 'duration') than others ('credentials,' and 'details'), especially on the cognitive level of pupils, which underlines that its primary use is for my teacher-reader. My own struggle to make sense of my pupils meeting a veteran in the classroom showed that even one of the most elusive literary decoys of war like 'diversions,' opened some unexpected windows to the world written in the Derridean 'margins' of a war text. And this is precisely where the intervention failed. It was a loss which the blog task did not fill, lacking for my pupils the sense of urgency which all the previous interventions did possess. In a bid to write the war back into the classroom, foregrounding the stories of refugee pupils in the classroom, but also those of my Dutch students and their impressions living in a climate of war, I designed a creative writing task from this urgent need, endeavouring to return the loss of immediacy and of relevance they

felt upon reading Iraq War blogs. Looking back, in fact, writing their own poetry had been a form of creative writing too, and creating a Bergen-Belsen film was a multimodal creative writing task. Eager to foreground their own experience, their own 'crisis' as it were, I intervened, and asked my pupils to respond to war by writing their own blogs, thus filling in the empty spaces of war. Writing their testimonies, my pupils achieved a sense of urgency and agency vis-à-vis the literature curriculum and external force-fields that seek to sway its course.

Because not a single school, class, teacher and pupil is the same, the **ten literary interventions** outlined here will have to be designed to suit each and every singular teacher, class, setting and occasion. All these curricular innovations do not offer a one-size-fits-all solution. More than anything else, teachers' and pupils' individual creativity needs to be called upon to either adapt their existing curricula or create new ones. However, every one of the ten interventions has integrated such teacher and pupil engagement in their design. For further clarity, from these ten literary interventions I hereby introduce for my teacher-reader a **ten-step literary model** to adhere to in the design of literature tasks in the classroom. It is advised that the design of new literary interventions:

1. **Are multimodal,**
2. **Interdisciplinary,**
3. **Use canonical and non-canonical texts,**
4. **Draw a connection to societal concerns,**
5. **Are international, multicultural,**
6. **Draw from McLoughlin's tropes,**
7. **Include in-classroom and out-of-classroom interventions,**
8. **Seek for a connection with the force-fields,**
9. **Establish pathos formula;**
10. **These steps lead de facto to *Bildung***

Back in the classroom, my present students, 'watching the news twenty times,' carry with them these fresh images of 'Globalsorrow' (Vegter 2014) on the retinae of their recent memories. 'Wars,' indeed, 'don't end' as Ondaatje (2018) surmises, conflict pouring perpetually into my pupils' lives with clockwork regularity. This book hopes to have convincingly argued that contrary to former wartime President George W. Bush, when

living in a climate of war, art should be foremost on humanity's mind. For me much had changed since the gagged days of the summer of 2014, the downing of 'MH17' and the starting point of my research and this book. Foremost, confidence had replaced my anxiety.

For these chapters have shown how literature, specific sets of multimodal war narratives, which resound very strongly our collective cultural memory, however fragile, has proven the most powerful weapon an English teacher or indeed any language teacher can wield to address the sensitive issue of war. Moreover, I have also shown that more than any other place, the classroom allows for canon formation, selecting lesser known (war) narratives from the armoury of cultural memory by adding them to classroom curricula. Arguably the most tangible result of my research is that the popularity and success of literary interventions like these that I have outlined in this book have led to the realisation of a custom-designed classroom at my school. It has a library filled with a plethora of multimodal war narratives to draw from as a teacher searching ways to teach war trauma and Holocaust. It has a stage, wardrobe and smartboard ready to facilitate pupils' own tasks and testimonies, the art pupils create from the ashes of their newly acquired artificial limbs. Further, the interventions in the classroom have led to the design of two war literature curricula for Havo and Vwo upper-level pupils, the so-called 'Taalwijs2.'[222] This, in turn, has led to my heading of a professional learning community for language teachers at the Vrije Universiteit, and kick-started a cross-curricular and thematic development of a literature course on African American literature and Dystopian literatures along the lines of the 10-step-modal.

To my teacher-reader I want to stress that I hope these chapters have shown how all my interventions started anxiously. The fragility of a teacher facing a gaggle of juveniles whose political preferences and societal background vary to the very highest degree: nowhere in society is such a variety in backgrounds assembled together in one daily organisation. Schools are truly the last bastions of our collective whole as nations, as a society, as a place where we safeguard our collective memory, and invest in understanding the world around us. A world, my book has shown, which is as conflict-ridden as ever, a world in which teachers like myself and my reader are asked to address these conflicts, are asked to talk in class about the rise of extremist views to the right and left, are asked to put on our curricula ways to address war and Holocaust, are asked to dare and teach the difficult lessons that go way beyond our remit. All my interventions

started from the belief that 'if our species can be said to have a soul, it lives in the humanities' (Wilson 2014, 185). It stems from the belief that I could draw upon my practical experience in the classroom and expertise as a literature scholar and put something as fragile as a war poem on the curriculum in finding answers to address war, terror, and the Holocaust. All it needs is that first tender step towards addressing the conundrum which society, science and our Minister(s) of Education set teachers like us: watching a Vietnam War movie, reading Sassoon's war poetry, reading the iconic diary of Anne Frank or a blog from the wars in Iraq. Having shown the immeasurable power of literature, foregrounding it as a key weapon in the hands of teachers battling society, science and politics' problems, this book is an emphatic plea to stop cutting and start investing in the Humanities.

Because literature education in Dutch secondary schools has hitherto remained an ungoverned and disorganised territory (Witte, Rijlaarsdam and Schram 2010), it has been my aim with this book to offer a literary model as an example to implement gateways to citizenship and '*Bildung*' through my curricula on war literature. It is a first step in the development of a 'New Curriculum' (Biesta & Priestley 2013), integrating the mores of *Bildung* and citizenship, and at once a plea for other teachers to join in. The benchmark advice to foreground teaching citizenship values at secondary school level is, at the moment of writing, taken a step further by a group of teachers, teacher-leaders and educational policy makers. Entitled Curriculum.nu, their advice is aimed at school-implementation level and will seek political approval in the year to come.

This book contributes to this Dutch curriculum development by opposing a state-imposed creation of a separate citizenship subject at school, in that it foresees a lack of teacher ownership and pupil motivation, let alone absence of curriculum and exam material. Rather, I want to underscore the chance for language education to foreground literature and centralize it in their curricula to establish value driven education. Teachers of languages like myself and my readers are indeed what Andreas Schleicher calls 'moral agents' (Schleicher 2016), and this book is an appeal to my colleagues to become part of the design of a new curriculum through their own existing subject. Before state-imposed citizenship subjects are poured top-down across education, (English) language and literature teachers should grab the chance to keep their autonomy intact, to activate their existing knowledge base and expertise, notwithstanding their peer networks becoming instrumental in a broader dissemination of curriculum development.

To this end, of course, this book and its interventions may be drawn upon liberally. Statistically, of course, the figures in this book are not compelling, yet they do bolster my thematic approach. This choice has allowed a wide scope on a variety of levels. First, this book spans across various years of teaching teenagers, from the youngest of my school on their classics field trip to the Dutch capital framed by war and commemoration to the very eldest adopting a poem and writing their own in the trenches and cemeteries of the Ypres Salient. Second, the interventions in this book span different education types, including Fast Lane English, and its field trip to the Scottish battlefields, drawing from these tasks to inspire a group of student-experts to find Anne Frank beyond her diary, to travel and film their own long road to Bergen-Belsen in search of the lost voices of Anne's narrative. Third, it has inspired extra-curricular lessons, forming a voluntary group of pupils from the regular Vwo-stream to meet a veteran of Iraq and war poet live in the classroom. And finally, the interventions have been applied across different educational levels, catering not just for those A-level students in preparation of university, but also for the Havo-stream. Their confidence, self-esteem and respect for each other was significantly enhanced after directing scenes from a chosen Vietnam War movie, channelling their frustration and facilitating discourse.

The Vietnam War movie intervention has shown that literary tasks in this book are not without its pitfalls. Pupils' blind trust in the combat-gnostic narrator, easily mistaking Hollywood's iconic fictional screen characters such as *Platoon*'s Barnes and Elias, with real veterans' autopsy, such as the narratives of Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien or the veteran in the classroom himself, Brian Turner. Uncovering the dominance of images versus the written word in teenager's lives, it underscores the importance of the teacher to guide pupils, and further foregrounds the necessity to reclaim the ever-growing lost territory with regard to secondary school students' ability to distinguish the validity of various sources and recognising real and fake news and their reading skills. The starting point to enhance and train the latter is reading motivation, which is, sadly, at an all-time low at the moment of writing.

Recent research by Pisa has indicated that reading skills amongst teenagers continue to decline. Dutch secondary school pupils score especially negatively amongst 600 thousand teenagers interviewed globally sixty percent never read, claiming it is useless.[223] Adding insult to injury, I had been lulled into a false hope that scholars would provide the answer, yet they have proven as much part of the force-fields of their group

as politicians. They expected of me to break with the tradition of teaching the canonical war poetry of Sassoon and Owen, a source of frustration to certain politicians and historians, yet the centenary anthologies did not do so themselves. Furthermore, 'understanding how the authorial obfuscations, misrepresentations and deliberate decoys' in war literature work, is an 'act of good citizenship,' Kate McLoughlin (2011, 20) rightly claims. Yet in a bid to separate the theoretical wheat from the chaff, aiming to provide my teacher-readers with a hands-on analytical tool for a class involved with (writers of) war narratives, I had to translate McLoughlin's theory to English at secondary school level and tone fit for classroom use.

Teachers and students, therefore, have to find their own way. Becoming a teacher-scholar was mine, unlocking the archive, opening the canon, broadening genres: pupils have to be exposed to war narratives, not to force-feed them opinions but to make students think. In all probability, it will remain 'unclear whether war sweetens the study of poetry or vice versa' (Rawlinson 2007, 116). Yet hope can be garnered from this book, for if anything, war narratives have an almost electric and powerful appeal upon pupils, motivating them to read beyond the comfort zones of their mobile phones streaming their preferred filmic genre, and awakening their sorely missed motivation to read literature.

Following up current educational theory and policy, involving and interconnecting all subjects, I have shown how my new war literature curricula move pupils beyond the relatively confined space of teaching English as a foreign language in the Netherlands by applying a multimodal approach, breaking beyond its traditional language and literature content. I am, of course, aware that time presses ever-heavily on teachers, and that drawing from the tasks in this book is more easily said than done. A war poem, however, is an easily available classroom weapon to apply, and its short form lends perfectly to lesson length instruction, which Einhaus & Pennell (2014, 47) confirm. Some of the lesson suggestions, such as meeting a veteran in the classroom, are more elaborate to achieve than others. Yet their realisation is by no means singled out for over ambitious teacher-scholars. Every school harbours readily available structures which can be redefined in such a way that they will fit even the most ambitious of interventions, such as travelling to Bergen-Belsen. Relaying the route of an existing school-trip to popular destinations like Berlin, by travelling past this Holocaust memorial, or stopping in Ypres or Thiepval on the way to London or Paris, is part of the possibility and will kickstart a broader redesign of existing curricula.

To bolster these potential initiatives, foregrounding the plethora of opportunities that the interventions in this book may bring to education, underscoring the argument of this book, I wish to make a series of recommendations to the force-fields of science, society and most of all politics and the Ministry of Education, who financed and kickstarted my research. It is vital that the position of the Humanities is foregrounded by strengthening literature education. This is done by facilitating teachers to develop literary language tasks with clear ties to delicate subjects the force fields of science, politics and society wishes education to deal with, Holocaust and War being the most necessary amongst these issues. These tasks will prove a vital asset in the battle against the sharp decline in teenagers reading literature. Concretely, my advice is to facilitate and finance the broad formation of professional learning communities for teachers, led by teacher-researchers. These will prove the ideal place to disseminate the theory and literary interventions such as these in this book, as well as translate them to the individual professional and their school.

Furthermore, given the importance of pupil ownership via their own testimonial products, ranging from writing a war poem to creating their own film, these tasks travel well and underscore the necessity of an obligatory field trip to a 'Lieu des mémoire,' as Pierre Nora explains, 'the principal places or sites in which memory [is] rooted,' (Landsberg 2004, 6). An obligatory field trip to a place of memory and mourning needs to be added to the so-called 'kerndoelen' (core-goals) of Dutch education. Top-down governmental funding both essential and egalitarian, the extra financial impulse will enable all school denominations to participate, regardless of a school population's wealth or educational level. This in itself is an act of good citizenship and gives concrete opportunity to address the 'sensitive' issues at school. Furthermore, its frame will allow teachers to win over their anxiousness, whereas a broad national lay-out will give rise to peer consultancy and conferencing. It will allow a variety of secondary school subjects to structurally interconnect and putting so-called 'core-subject' English and/or Dutch language and literature central to the trip and tasks will further bolster the Humanities.

From the gas-attacks of Ghouta to the Bataclan in Paris, from the commemorations of 'MH17' to World War I and II, from Iraqi refugees to Syrians such as my pupil Ceylin now taking their place in Dutch classrooms, this book has shown that war invades the classroom in many guises. The classroom example above shows the cynical ease with which a teacher may choose from the events of conflict, in this case the rise of anti-

Semitism, extremist views culminating in violence. The challenge lies in selecting the potential pathos formula war narrative to trigger teenagers with, as well as finding a scholarly frame and, importantly, a hands-on task for pupils to engage with that will allow them to reflect and come to terms with the subject at hand, as well as empower them in their blossoming role as future citizens. This is why it is important to create a task which includes the creative design of pupils' products. Their testimonies cannot be underestimated.

Teenagers are increasingly defined by presentism, bombarded with information every single second of their day, perpetually trapped in the moment of now and viewing the past and others through their individual time-bound lenses. They will welcome the (war) poetry of the future as part of their social revolution to break their multimedia cage, breaking free and find the empty spaces in time and text to contemplate their futures and their histories. As 'communicative memory' continues to shift into 'cultural memory' (Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka 1995, 125-33), we find ourselves in a day and age where where 'memory is unmoored', and gives in to a 'careless memory,' the need to remember fades and 'social obligation is carried out by our digital networks and prostheses' (Hoskins 2011, 19). Pupils' testimonial war literature tasks make up such, prosthetic limbs of their awakening, their will to be 'shaken' by war narratives in the classroom, (Fussell 2013, 184). It is all about awakening the creative and thoughtful force of these future global citizens, not about teachers force-feeding them their politics, or force-fields feeding them theirs. Literature gives a swing to a pupil's pendulum, a swing against the lethargy of presentism, and teachers are there to help them stir. In times of war, art should be the first thing on humanity's mind, and if not in the mind of our past and present leaders, then in those of the future, the pupils of today.

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Endnotes

[1] The balloon was sent from Gateford Park Primary School in Worksop on 18 December 2014, https://www.gatefordpark.com/.

[2] The central goals of Modern Languages include no more than three works of literature of every pupil at the end of their secondary school career, and only the upper levels (Vwo) are required to be able to place these in a literary historical context and reflect on them using literary terms and skills. https://www.examenblad.nl/examenstof/syllabus-2020-moderne-vreemde-4/2020/f=/mvt_vwo_2_versie_2020_def.pdf. See 'Domein E: Literatuur', 'Subdomein E1', 'E2', 'E3'.

[3] The Dutch relatively lost more of its citizens than the Americans did on September 11, 2001 (Joustra 2014).

[4] For clarity, the following approximation might be useful to my teacher-reader from overseas. Roughly speaking, the Dutch secondary school system has a variety of different levels on offer to pupils, with schools free to choose which levels they wish to offer. My school, the OSG West-Friesland, offers Mavo, Havo and Vwo. Mavo is a four-year long trajectory, which ends with an equivalent of GCSE exams. Havo is a five-year run roughly comparing as in between 'O' and 'AS' level. Vwo takes six year to complete and translates as equivalent to A-level. All levels have state organised exams in their final year.

[5] Amongst the many historians, politicians and journalists to pick up this comparison was Matt Carr, who published his article, fittingly titled "Shooting down of flight MH17: Are we stumbling into world war like 100 years ago?" on 21 July 2014, just four days after the MH17 was shot down. http://noglory.org/index.php/articles/251-shooting-down-of-flight-mh17-are-we-stumbling-into-world-war-like-100-years-ago.

[6] I was amongst the first of 36 teachers to receive a grant from the Dutch Ministry of Education to be able to do research and continue teaching. Its goals are to let the daily teaching practice benefit directly from teachers' research, strengthen ties between university and schools, and improve the quality of education by increasing the number of Ph.D. qualified teachers. https://www.nwo.nl/financiering/onze-financieringsinstrumenten/sgw/promotiebeurs-voor-leraren/promotiebeurs-voor-leraren.html

[7] This was class Vwo6C in their final schoolyear 2014-2015, comprising of 15 boys and 16 girls, aged between 16-19 years old.

[8] A 'war to exorcise world madness and end an age' (Wells 1914, 11).

[9] On 25 July 25 2009, the last living soldier of World War I died: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/26/world-war-one-veteran-harry-patch-dies-aged-111. The British did not let this moment go unmarked: various memorial services were held and the BBC asked Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy (1955-) to write a poem in response.

[10] 'This is the highest teaching qualification in the Netherlands, granted upon completion of a university programme of teacher training (ULO). The holder is qualified to teach one subject at all levels of general secondary education and vocational education. It is intended primarily for teachers of the final years of HAVO and VWO.' https://www.nuffic.nl/en/nuffic-glossary/eerstegraads-onderwijsbevoegdheid/

[11] Dutch Prime Minister Rutte quoted lines from Vegter's poem in his speech during the National Commemoration Service held on 10 November 2014: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2014/11/10/toespraak-van-minister-president-mark-rutte-op-de-nationale-herdenking-van-de-slachtoffers-van-de-ramp-met-mh17 . Moreover, the Poet Laureate read out her

poem on Dutch national television the next day: http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2014/11/11/terugkijken-anne-vegter-draagt-mh17-gedicht-voor-bij-pauw.

[12] Freshly alive, / a lad plays Tipperary to the crowd, released / from History; the glistening, healthy horses fit for heroes, for kings. (Duffy 2013b, 112-13)

[13] You lean against a wall, / your several million lives still possible / and crammed with love, work, children, talent, English beer, / good food. (Duffy 2013b, 112-13)

[14] Every Vwo-6 class I have taught this course since that summer (2014-2019) have had a tangible personal tie to one of the victims of MH17. Rather than painting a picture of local proximity to the disaster, I want to point out its national significance: 'within 24-hours, everyone [in Holland] more or less knew someone who had been affected by the calamity' (Joustra 2014).

[15] Van Amerongen is not a professional poet, though he is the author of this poem. Neither is he well known for writing poetry. It is a post linked to the NRC, a leading Dutch quality newspaper, a Facebook poetic reaction and as such garnered attention. Posted on 22 July at 12:21: https://www.facebook.com/NRC/posts/547592602019298.

[16] In the immediate days after the MH17 disaster, suspicious fingers pointed to the Russian army who were operative in Eastern Ukraine, supporting the separatist army. Recently, extensive evidence supplied by investigative teams Bellingcat and the Joint Invenstigation Team (JIT) have led to indictments against Russian soldiers; Australia and the Netherlands officially holding Russia responsible. https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/met-volharding-en-precisie-op-zoek-naar-gerechtigheid-voor-de-nabestaanden-van-vlucht-mh17~bc4361b6/

[17] Van Amerongen, 'MH17', https://www.facebook.com/NRC/posts/547592602019298.

[18] A trend signalled in a leading Dutch educational magazine, written by Arno Kersten, titled (in translation) 'Schools need to do too much.' http://www.aob.nl/default.aspx?id=220&article=51273&q=&m=

[19] http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8175000/8175790.stm, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2014/11/10/toespraak-van-minister-president-mark-rutte-op-de-nationale-herdenking-van-de-slachtoffers-van-de-ramp-met-mh17.

[20] Referring to the refugee crisis in Europe in his keynote speech delivered at the ISTP in Berlin, addressing the world's education leaders.

[21] Although it is beyond the scope of this book to discuss this in greater detail, I am deeply concerned about the increasing demographical segregation which is taking place, especially in metropolitan areas of the Netherlands, which have resulted in so-called white and black schools, undermining the uniform cultural and democratic collective of education. Bringing this process to a halt and reversing it should have top political priory.

[22] 'Featuring four years of programming and events spanning 1914-1918 – echoing the timeframe of the war – the World War One Centenary on the BBC will be unique in scale and breadth on BBC TV, Radio and Online and across international, national and local services.' http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2013/world-war-one-centenary.html.

[23] Listing, amongst others, Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*: https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-vijf-beste-volgens-paul-moeyes. These are but a few examples of the huge attention Dutch media and cultural organisations have given to the First World War centenary. Significantly, all focus on British cultural output.

[24] In 2014 the number of tourists visiting the Westhoek increased from 415,500 to 789,500. http://www.westtoer.be/sites/westtoer/files/editor/kenniscentrum/Regio/PR-MMBKDF-Persconferentie%20Finaal_fullscreen.pdf .

[25] 65% of foreign tourists visiting the Westhoek are British (231,000), followed by 19% Dutch (66,700). http://www.westtoer.be/sites/westtoer/files/editor/kenniscentrum/Regio/PR-MMBKDF-Persconferentie%20Finaal_fullscreen.pdf.

[26] https://slo.nl/thema/vakspecifieke-thema/mvt/engels-kernvak/

[27] http://onsonderwijs2032.nl/taalvaardigheid/.

[28] Further evidence of crossing the cultural language divide between the Netherlands and Great Britain is the development of Fast Lane English in Dutch schools. Literally comprising of extra hours of English every week, students are immersed

in English culture via its literature, by way of which they learn to become both excellent users of the English language and its cultural history.

[29] *Blackadder,* BBC One: 28/09/1989–02-11-1989, directed by Richard Curtis, and *Oh! What a Lovely War*, 1969, directed by Richard Attenborough.

[30] Of all History teachers, for example, 74% use war poetry as a resource in class (Einhaus and Pennell 2014, 1-104, resource ranking on pages 35 and 51).

[31] 82% of History Pathway teachers use *Blackadder goes Forth* as a source, as do 36% of English Pathway teachers (Einhaus and Pennell 2014, 35 and 51).

[32] Nigel Biggar also included a repentant Sassoon to his argument in his book *In Defence of War*, published in 2013 (Biggar 2013b, 143).

[33] I argue as much in my article *Ironische en iconische oorlogsverhalen* (Niemeijer 2014): 'Sassoon did not always control his own emotions, he was not a linear person, with one opinion and one belief. He was not a pacifist, and yet he also wrote anti-war poetry.'

[34] Natasja Kovalenko, class V6C; A-level final year 2014-2015 of the OSG West-Friesland.

[35] Letter by Dr Jet Bussemaker, former Secretary of State for Education of the Netherlands, dated 17 September 2013. The letter was sent to the 'LerarenKamer,' a group of teachers who have all been elected as Teacher of the Year in the Netherlands between 1999 and 2019, and of which I am chairman.

[36] http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2009/02/dan-todmans-wilfred-owen.html;

[37]http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2009/02/dan-todmans-wilfred-owen.html; last accessed 21-9-2016.

[38] http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2009/02/dan-todmans-wilfred-owen.html; last accessed 21-9-2016.

[39] http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2009/02/dan-todmans-wilfred-owen.html; last accessed 21-9-2016.

[40] http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2009/02/dan-todmans-wilfred-owen.html; last accessed 21-9-2016.

[41] 'The irony of the trench poets […] was not the only cultural form in which representations of war were framed' (Winter 1999, 345). By reflecting on the 'popular myths of the war at the time it was written,' Paul Fussell 'reinforced them by giving them academic approval' (Todman 2014, 158).

[42] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/pacifism.

[43] Dutch news website reporting on gas attacks: http://www.nu.nl/buitenland/3555307/honderden-doden-bij-gifgasaanval-syrie.html; last accessed 1-9-2016.

[44] Dutch news website reporting on Dutch bombs dropped on Syria: http://www.nu.nl/syrie/4215798/nederlandse-f-16s-gooien-eerste-bommen-in-syrie.html.

[45] https://www.onderzoeksraad.nl/en/page/6932/dutch-safety-board-buk-surface-to-air-missile-system-caused-mh17-crash

[46] The levels in the UK at secondary school I suggest a war poetry curriculum for, would be beyond GCSE level: O-level and A-level students. The Dutch equivalent of this is beyond the so-called 'onderbouw,' (under 16s) teaching war poetry in the 'bovenbouw' (upper 16s) of Mavo-Havo-Vwo.

[47] Owen 1990a, 117. The final four lines are also quoted in Klooster (2012, 177) in answer to Hector's call to arms.

[48] In Jon Stallworthy's chronologically ordered anthology of war poetry, *The Iliad* is preceded only by excerpts from the Bible (Stallworthy 2014, 1-10).

[49] https://www.trendsinbeeldocw.nl/verantwoord-begroten/dashboard-sectorakkoorden/dashboard-sectorakkoord-vo/professionele-leraren/masteropgeleide-leraren; last accessed 14-12-2016.

[50] Walter (1996), Rawlinson (2007), Kendall (2013), Goldensohn (2013), and Das (2013) to name but a few of the most recently published and widely read literary critics and anthologists.

[51] Both Stallworthy 2014 and Kendall 2013 give the name of the friend whom Yeats was in mourning over.

[52] Letter sent to the 'LerarenKamer' by Dr Jet Bussemaker, former Secretary of State for Education of the Netherlands; letter dated 17 September 2013.

[53] Though it is hard to find two sources that agree on the definite amount of dead, Keegan (1999, 7) estimates that 'something between two and three percent of the British, French and German populations' died during World War I.

[54] Edmund Blunden writes in 1930 (18): 'Today the name of Siegfried Sassoon is perhaps associated by most readers with his finely modulated prose work, the *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*; but it was *The Old Huntsman* of 1917 that he set out, a unique adventurer, to tell the truth about war poetically.' What striking difference with

today, when Sassoon is foremost remembered for his poetry and protest, and less so for his memoirs.

[55] Few of the now canonical poets were published in war poetry anthologies in the decade after World War I, though a permanent place for soldier poetry had been fixed. Besides Osborn and Lloyd's anthologies, only one other anthology, *Valour and Vision*, had published poetry by Sassoon, editor Jacqueline Trotter including one poem ('Dreamers') by the giant of the canon in her anthology (cf. Sassoon 1920, 98).

[56] With the notable exception of David Jones (1895-1974), who has given many anthologists a headache in their consideration whether and how to include his lengthy and much lauded poem, 'In Parenthesis'.

[57] Parsons 1985, 14. There are 25 poems by Sassoon and Owen in this anthology, originally published in 1965, a year after Gardner's.

[58] Rosenberg (1985, 159); see also Gardner (1964, 133) and Brereton (1930, 130). Brereton is the first to include Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est' in an anthology of First World War poetry. War poet and anthologist Robert Nichols omits both Rosenberg's entire oeuvre and Owen's most famous poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est' from his 1943 anthology.

[59] In the Netherlands, applicants for the Dutch Army, its infantry, air force and marines, need to be seventeen years of age. https://werkenbijdefensie.nl/werken-bij/, last accessed 26-1-2017.

[60] This was Selma Smits who, together with Marija Dragutinovic, taught the war poetry course I had designed for our Vwo 6 classes alongside me.

[61] Antonia van Dongelen and Brenda Ramaker, excerpt from 'It's Not That Bad,' presented at the 'Execution Pole' in Poperinghe, on 13-10-2016.

[62] Ingeborg Aardoorn, of class V6B 2016-2017, quoted from her presentation at St. George's Memorial Church, in Ypres, on 12 October 2016.

[63] Ingeborg Aardoorn, 'Once I'm A Lady', presented at St. George's Memorial Church, in Ypres, on 12-10-2016.

[64] Todman 2014, 143, also quoted by Tim Kendall, in the Comment Stream following his review of Gardner's 1964 anthology, on http://war-poets.blogspot.nl/2010/10/brian-gardner-up-line-to-death.html.

[65] 'Despite a lot of competition, Silkin's anthology remains the most influential representation of the poetry of the First World War' (Haughton 2007, 437).

[66] Jacoba Lachman, 'My Boy Jack', presented at the Communal Cemetery in Ors, France, where Wilfred Owen is buried, on 11-10-2016.

[67] Jacoba Lachman quoted from her presentation at the Communal Cemetery in Ors, France, where Wilfred Owen is buried, on 11-10-2016.

[68] My translation of 'Geen voorstelling van te maken', the title of an information post at the Hollandsche Schouwburg, located at the Plantage Middenlaan 24, in the former Jewish quarter of Amsterdam.

[69] Website Hollandsche Schouwburg, http://jck.nl/en/node/965; last accessed 9-3-2017.

[70] https://www.hollandfestival.nl/en/program/2014/war-horse/, last accessed 25 July, 2019.

[71] https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/nieuws/18581/grootste-nederlander-is-willem-van-oranje.html, last accessed 20-4-2017.

[72] Interview conducted on 4 March 2016, during the International Summit for the Teaching Profession 2016, when I was part of the Dutch delegation led by former minister Jet Bussemaker. http://www.istp2016.org/, last accessed 22-5-2017.

[73] See Chapter 2, page 28 for more details.

[74] Letter sent to the 'LerarenKamer' by Dr Jet Bussemaker, former Secretary of State for Education of the Netherlands; letter dated 17-9-2013. http://lerarenkamer.onderwijscooperatie.nl, accessed 22-7-2016.

[75] http://www.tblt.org/start/, last accessed 25-5-2017.

[76] http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/battle-of-bannockburn-poem-for-700th-anniversary-1-3056944 , last accessed 25-5-2017.

[77] https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2013/08/kathleen-jamie-bannockburn-inscription/, 25-5-2017.

[78] Known popularly as 'Oh Come All Ye Faithfull'.

[79] http://petallproject.eu/petall/index.php/en/what-s-it-for, last accessed 2-5- 2017.

[80] The self named group the 'Semi-Matured', or task-team, consisted of OSG students Jantina Advocaat, Geesje Lustig, Geertruida Legerstee, Gezina Smit, Hubert de Vries, Andries Niezen, Egbert de Man, Gerda Janssen, Ingeborg Aardoorn, Riekje Huisman and Clasina Slagboom. They were all fourth year Fast-Lane students of

school year 2014-2015. Throughout this book I will refer to this group as the task team, or the 'Semi-Matured;' to the film, as the student film; and to this field trip to Bremen and Bergen-Belsen, as the Bergen-Belsen field trip, which took place from 8 November until 10 November 2015.

[81] All comments and questions cited in this chapter were made or posed by myself or members of the 'Semi-Matured' during the Bergen-Belsen field trip.

[82] http://www.kampwesterbork.nl/en/onderwijs/index.html#/index, last accessed 13-5-2017.

[83] Radio interview with Bessel van der Kolk, www.onbeing.org/program/restoring-the-body-bessel-van-der-kolk-on-yoga-emdr-and-treating-trauma/5801, last accessed 22-7-2016.

[84] Adorno 1995, 49. 'Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch.'

[85] Wilson, on the cover of *The Diary* (2002).

[86] Quote from the student film.

[87] See http://historiek.net/app-wandelen-door-het-amsterdam-van-anne-frank/15953/, and https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/annes-amsterdam/id520476666?mt=8, last accessed 29-6-2017.

[88] 'Amsterdam was unnecessarily harsh with issuing fines for Jews', the headline in a newspaper article (Trommelen 2015; my translation) quipped.

[89] Upon visiting Yad Vashem in Jerusalem during an international conference on education in the Spring of 2012, I was struck by the particular stress that was laid upon the massive betrayal of Jews in the Netherlands.

[90] Ingeborg Aardoorn in reaction to Egbert de Man, during one of the extra-curricular classes than ran between September and November 2015

[91] 'Pictures every British citizen should see', *Daily Express*, 21-4-1945, in Lowther (2015, 117).

[92] A question, Hugh Haughton (2007, 43) argues, which, due to the relative lack of a poetic response to the war, was also repeatedly on society's mind as the Second World War raged.

[93] As Einhaus and Pennell (2014, 45) have shown with regards to the reasons for the widespread choice of war poetry above all other genres when teaching about World War I.

[94] Here Anthony Hecht relates 'a brutal incident based on a passage from *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, by Eugene Kogan' (Oostdijk 2011, 116).

[95] From Hecht's 'More Light! More Light!', quoted by Andries Niezen on nearing the Bergen-Belsen memorial site during their field trip.

[96] Students quoted in the student film.

[97] Geesje Lustig in the student film.

[98] http://bergen-belsen.stiftung-ng.de/en/education-encounters.html, last accessed 6-7-2017.

[99] Andries Niezen and Egbert de Man, quoted at the Bergen-Belsen memorial site during their field trip.

[100] Conversation with pupils Gezina Smit, Gerda Janssen, Jantina Advocaat, Egbert de Man and Ingeborg Aardoorn on 3 April 2017.

[101] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34818994, last accessed 10-7-2017.

[102] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/paris-rocked-by-explosions-and-schootouts-leaving-dozens-dead/2015/11/13/133f5bc2-8a50-11e5-bd91-d385b244482f_story.html?utm_term=.3013accbbb60, last accessed 10-7-2017.

[103] This was class H5A, 2015-2016, of the OSG West-Friesland, to which I will refer throughout this chapter as 'fight class' or 'H5A.' Featuring pupils are Teunis Rademakers, Anton Gal, Lammert Titshof, Aart Honderd, Roelof Decheiver, Alfred Rups, Ruud van Foppen, Gerard Pietersen, Sjoerd Ganzeman, Jozef Haassen, Marinus Hakkeboer, Ivo den Tieter, Jan van 't Hol, Bernardina van 't Hol, Herman de Vilder, Dirkje IJspeerd and Abbas Benani.

[104] Geesje Lustig, in the student film.

[105] http://www.hetabc.nl/paris-in-de-klas/, which links to: http://alderikvisser.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/wenken-voor-maandag-terreur-en-de-school.html, which describes the steps in more detail. Last accessed 10-7-2017. I also found a useful PowerPoint on http://dearproject.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Paris-Terrorism-attack-November-2015.pptx

[106] Extract from my lesson to class H5A, 2015-2016, on Monday 16 November 2015, 4th hour (11:25-12:15), at the OSG West-Friesland. See also http://www.hetabc.nl/paris-in-de-klas/ and http://alderikvisser.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/wenken-voor-maandag-terreur-en-de-school.html.

[107] As I have previously shown, McLoughlin argues that 'it now seems evident,' she continues,' that the First World War's natural form was the lyric poem, that the Second World War's was the epic novel, that the Vietnam War's was the movie, that the Iraq Wars' may well turn out to be the blog' (2011, 10).

[108] Gert Biesta, http://www.hetabc.nl/paris-in-de-klas/, last accessed 11-7-2017.

[109] Jet Bussemaker, letter sent to the chairman of the Dutch House of Commons, dated 2-3-2016. See https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/bewindspersonen/jet-bussemaker/documenten/kamerstukken/2016/11/11/kamerbrief-over-rapport-twee-werelden-twee-werkelijkheden, last accessed 11-7-2017.

[110]https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2016/01/23/eindadvies-platform-onderwijs2032-ons-onderwijs2032, last accessed 11-7-2017.

[111]https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2016/01/23/eindadvies-platform-onderwijs2032-ons-onderwijs2032, 23, last accessed 11-7-2017.

[112]https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2016/01/23/eindadvies-platform-onderwijs2032-ons-onderwijs2032, 23, last accessed 11-7-2017.

[113] 'Mostly Islamic pupils who disrupt minute silence for Paris', *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 19-11-2015. https://www.rd.nl/vandaag/binnenland/veelal-islamitische-scholieren-verstoren-minuut-stilte-om-parijs-1.510542, last accessed 14-7-2017

[114] Extract from my lessons to class H5A, 2015-2016, 1 February 2016 at the OSG West-Friesland.

[115] The so-called 'Methodiek Dialoog als Burgerschaps-instrument' by Diversion, http://downloads.slo.nl/Documenten/definitieve-methodiek-dialoog-als-burgerschapsinstrument.pdf.

[116] https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and- facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/ last accessed 01-06-2020

[117] Ibid.

[118] There is a striking difference with history teachers in Britain in this respect, as Einhaus and Pennell discovered 'a primacy of visual sources' in their teachings on the First World War, next to a steady 74% of history teachers that use war poetry as a resource (Einhaus and Pennell 2014, 31-55).

[119] 'Practical considerations make war poetry (as opposed to longer prose or drama) an obvious choice – poetry tends to be short, self-contained, and well suited to practicing linguistic and stylistic analysis' (Einhaus and Pennell 2014, 45).

[120] 'Poetry has sought to regain territory "lost" to prose fiction' (Stallworthy 2014, xxxv).

[121] 'The reading public has become increasingly attuned to prose, and [...] the Word (prose as well as verse] has increasingly lost ground to the Image' (Stallworthy 2014, xl).

[122] Extract from my lessons to class H5A, 2015-2016, 1 February 2016 at the OSG West-Friesland.

[123] Compare with McLuhan and Fiore (1968, 134): 'The public is now participant in every phase of the war, and the main actions of the war are now being fought in the American home itself'.

[124] Extract from my lesson to class H5A, 2015-2016, on Monday 16 ~~November~~ 2015, 4th hour (11:25-12:15), at the OSG West-Friesland.

[125] 'Despite coming of age at a time when the United States has been waging two wars, relatively few millennials – just 2% of males – are military veterans' (Taylor and Keeter 2010, 3).

[126] Extract from my lesson to class H5A, 2015-2016, 1 February, 2016 at the OSG West-Friesland.

[127] IMDB: Internet Movie Date Base, website list for the Vietnam movie project: http://www.imdb.com/list/ls008261939/; full listings under: http://www.imdb.com/user/ur28592370/lists?ref_=nv_usr_lst_3, last accessed 31-8-2017.

[128] Daniel Binns borrows this term from Jean-Francois Lyotard, explaining: 'a grand or metanarrative is the overarching narrative that binds the processes of society – economics, education, industry, politics – together, and is as much a reframing of the historical continuum as it is a state of mind' (Binns 2017, 13-14).

[129] 'Credibility' is one of the six universal tropes of writing war according to McLoughlin; parrhestiastes means 'the figure who speaks candidly' (McLoughlin 2011, 30).

[130] Canonical war films such as *Good Morning Vietnam*, *Platoon* and *Apocalypse Now* are given a 15 rating, while most other Vietnam War films, such as *The Deer Hunter*, *Full Metal Jacket, We Were Soldiers, Hamburger Hill, Casualties of War* and *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, are given a 16 rating. The exceptions are few, with *Green Berets*, *Rambo: First Blood* and *Rescue Dawn* deemed suitable at the very young age of 12, yet films such as *Tigerland* (2000), *Coming Home* (1978) and *Born on the Fourth of July* being given the comparatively surprising rating of 18.

[131] *Zero Dark Thirty*'s (2015) rating is 15, whilst *The Hurt Locker*'s (2008) is 16. It seems almost ironic that canonical films that capture the slaughterhouse of World War I's trench warfare, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), and its repercussions on those shot for desertion, *Paths of Glory* (1957), are given a liberal PG rating.

[132] Dutch central exams are planned in different years according to each level of education. The Havo students I refer to here would finish their school a year earlier (5th year) than Vwo students (6th year), and a year later than MAVO students (4th year). Thus, at the time, H5A were in their final exam year.

[133] Students consulted: http://www.imdb.com/list/ls008261939/, providing over a hundred titles to choose from. Over the course of time, pupils' choices have included *Coming Home, The Deer Hunter, Apocalypse Now, Gardens of Stone* (1987), *First Blood, Rambo: First Blood part II* (1985), *Platoon, Born on the Fourth of July, Casualties of War, Full Metal Jacket, Hamburger Hill, We Were Soldiers, Tigerland, Tropic Thunder* (2008), *Rescue Dawn*, and the surprising choice *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*.

[134] McLoughlin (2011) distinguishes six different tropes of war: 'credentials', 'laughter', 'details', 'zones', 'duration', and 'diversions'.

[135] Trijntje van Staveren and Hendrika Vork, class H5A, 2016-2017; presentation on *The Deer Hunter* (1978), by Michael Cimino, in March 2017.

[136] One example of many is John Rico on:
https://www.thoughtco.com/top-anti-war-movies-of-all-time-3438815, last accessed 2-11-2017.

[137] Sjoerd Ganzeman and Marinus Hakkeboer, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), by Stanley Kubrick, in March 2016.

[138] Lammert Tishof and Gerrit Flederus, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *First Blood* (1982), by Ted Kotcheff, in March 2016.

[139] Alberdina Walvisch and Henriëtte Klapwijk, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), by Oliver Stone, in March 2017.

[140] Abbas Benani, Jozef Haassen and Ivo den Tieter, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *Good Morning Vietnam* (1987), by Barry Levinson, in March 2016.

[141] Jeroen Kleinjan and Piet Koreneef, class H5A, 2016-2017; presentation on *Hamburger Hill* (1987), by John Irvin, in March 2017.

[142] Binns 2017, 62-63. Anton Gal and Bep Glasius, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *Apocalypse Now* (1979), by Francis Ford Coppola, in March 2016.

[143] Grietje Kwakkel and Ans Zwakman, class H5A, 2016-2017; presentation on *Apocalypse Now* (1979) in March 2017.

[144] From *Platoon* (1986), directed by Oliver Stone.

[145] Quoted from the script of *Platoon.* Oliver Stone, *Platoon and Salvador*, in Sturken (1997, 109).

[146] From *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

[147] Estimating the total death toll of the Vietnam War is a site of contention to this day. With regards to military loss, 'approximately 58,000 U.S. military personnel died in the Vietnam War', yet 'the number of Vietnamese Communist personnel who died is not known exactly', but estimated to to be 'almost certainly well over 600,000 […], more than 10 times the number of American deaths' (Moïse 2005, 13).

[148] From *Platoon* (1986).

[149] Hendrika Vork, class H5A, 2016-2017, in her written evaluation, April 2017.

[150] Wilhelmina Koekenbier, class H5A, 2016-2017, in her written evaluation, April 2017.

[151] Franciska Kramer, Dirkje IJspeerd and Bernardina van 't Hol, class H5A, 2015-2016; presentation on *We Were Soldiers* (2002) by Randall Wallace in March 2016.

[152] From *The Green Berets* (1968), directed by Ray Kellogg and John Wayne.

[153] Edith Zuurmond, 2016-2017, in her written evaluation, April 2017.

[154] From *We Were Soldiers* (2002).

[155] Dorothea Zuinig, class H5A, 2016-2017, in her written evaluation, April 2017.

[156] Andreas Pannekeet and Reinder Wetschrijver, class H5A, 2016-2017; presentation on *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* (1994), by Freida Lee Mock, in March 2016.

[157] A term coined by former president of the United States George W. Bush in his address during the joint session of Congress and the nation, on 20 September 2001. 'Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.' http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html, last accessed 10-8-2017.

[158] Extract from my lesson to class H5A, 2015-2016, on Monday 16 November 2015, 4th hour (11:25-12:15), at the OSG West-Friesland.

[159] Dorothea Zuinig, class H5A, 2016-2017, in her written evaluation, April 2017.

[160] Petra Slettenhaar and Paula van Zwam, 'My Lai in de eerste mediaoorlog'. Every secondary pupil in the Netherlands is required to undertake a school- based research-project, which pupils are required to have completed sufficiently before their state exams. These are called 'sectorwerkstukken' (Mavo) or 'profielwerkstukken' (Havo and Vwo).

[161] While performing research for his latest novel, writer Julien Ignacio give a lecture to, and participate in a Q&A on 9/11 and the post-millennial generation with, my pupils. I also invited historian Ewoud Kieft to talk about his latest work on the culture of the First World War and its effects on the 21st-century. Prof Dr Diederik Oostdijk of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam delivered a lecture on war poetry throughout the 20th and 21st-centuries. All of these classes were extra-curricular and took place at my school the OSG West-Friesland; each lecture attracted a full house.

[162] The NIO-test is an abbreviation of Nederlandse Intelligentietest voor Onderwijsniveau (Dutch Intelligencetest for Educational level). This final test gives an indication of a pupil's secondary school level. 'NIO toets', Wijzer over de Basisschool, https://wijzeroverdebasisschool.nl/kennisbank-rekenen/begrippenlijst/ nio-toets/, accessed 26-6-2018.

[163] NIO scores are averages that vary from 80 and under to 118 and above at the top of the scale. Although this volunteer platoon were all together in the same Vwo-level class, their NIO-scores had ranged between a low 98 and high 137.

[164] I had already made tentative steps towards customising education for my pupils, of which meeting a veteran in the classroom as well the war-lessons described in the previous chapters of this book are examples. On the basis of these experiments, during schoolyear 2016-2017, the OSG West-Friesland joined the first group of secondary schools nationwide in a governmental pilot, seeking ways to implementing tailor-made education. "Pilot met maatwerk op aantal vo-scholen," VOSABB, https://www.vosabb.nl/pilot-met-maatwerk/, accessed 26-6-2018.

[165] The VO-raad is the Dutch National council for secondary schools and representative of its collective boards of governors.

[166] My translation of 'maatwerk', which, according to Rosenmöller, is a concept that is hard to define: 'differentiate, individualise, personalise; or education made to measure?' (Rosenmöller 2017, 25).

[167] Gert Biesta and Mark Priestley, 'introduction: The New Curriculum', *Reinventing the Curriculum: New Trends in Curriculum Policy and Practice,* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 1-12.

[168] Quote from Brian Turner during a tailor-made class titled 'Veteran in the Classroom', hosted by myself and Diederik Oostdijk of the Faculty of Arts, at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. During the school year 2015-2016, a selection of pupils from the OSG West-Friesland travelled to Amsterdam to meet the war poet and memoirist Brian Turner, a former infantry sergeant who served in the Iraq War. These pupils were Ferdinand Oranjeboom, Edwin van Dronkelaar, Pieternella Siebum, Carla Briefjes, Gerdina Poese, Truus Roest, Hendrik Plukkel, Margje Schotanus and Aagje Rotgans. I will quote from this class throughout the chapter, referring to it as 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[169] Henrik Plukkel and Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[170] 'The suck' is a slang term whose origins lie in the military, as Austin Bay explains in an NPR radio interview on 8 March 2007. War is 'a tough situation, you wouldn't be here if it weren't a broken, challenging and dangerous situation, and that's the suck.' https://www.npr.org/2007/03/08/7458809/embrace-the-suck-and-more-military-speak, last accessed 22-3-2018.

[171] Aagje Rotgans during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[172] And none are given such a 'hard sell' as the centenary of the First World War (Brearton 2014).

[173] Hendrik Plukkel during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[174] Hendrik Plukkel and Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[175] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[176] 'The fact that while war is in progress, it is not known when, or how, or if it is going to end gives wartime its special property of open-endedness or endinglessness. […] It has [even] been pointed out that war does not end.' Kate McLoughlin, *Authoring War*, 107, 132.

[177] Aagje Rotgans and Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[178] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[179] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[180] Ferdinand Oranjeboom during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[181]Meeting Brian Turner was in itself a successful way of breaking down the enormity of the war into a more manageable size for my pupils; for them Turner came to stand for all combatants of the War on Terror.

[182] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[183] Ibid.

[184] From *Restrepo* (2010), directed by Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger.

[185] Radio interview with Bessel van der Kolk, www.onbeing.org/program/restoring-the-body-bessel-van-der-kolk-on-yoga-emdr-and-treating-trauma/5801, last accessed 22-7-2016.

[186] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[187] Despite having 'no direct experience of the Holocaust' some people become 'nonwitnesses', a phrase coined by Gary Weissman, 'deeply interested in studying, remembering and memorializing it' (Weissman 2004, 4).

[188] Gerdina Poese during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[189] 'Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch' (Adorno 1995, 49).

[190] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[191] https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and- facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far/ last accessed 01-06-2020

[192] Numbers taken from 'Overzicht doden bij Nederlandse Militaire Missies', published in *Trouw* on April 20, 2007, https://www.trouw.nl/home/ overzicht-doden-bij-nederlandse-militaire-missies~a60b4ab6/, last accessed 2-3-2018. Information on current and historic Dutch military mission taken from the website of the Dutch Ministry of Defence, https://www.defensie.nl/onderwerpen/historische-missies, last accessed on 2 March 2018.

[193] *Washinton Post*, 20-9-2001, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/ transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html, last accessed 2-3-2018.

[194] Hendrik Plukkel and Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[195] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[196] Margje Schotanus and Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[197] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.' John Wayne famously plays Sgt. John. M. Stryker in *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1947) by Allen Dwan.

[198] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[199] Hendrik Plukkel during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[200] Aagje Rotgans and Ferdinand Oranjeboom during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[201] I am convinced that what Huyssen describes as the 'memory boom' is symptomatic to what is called metamodernism, a term which, according to Ashley M. Contos, 'first appeared in the early 2000s' (Hendry and Page 2013, 55). Two Dutchmen are behind an influential website expanding the theory of metamodernism, Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker: http://www.metamodernism.com/.

[202] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[203] Whenever I meet a former pupil, nine times out of ten the conversation will turn to Ypres. Every year there are former pupils who send me an email or message via Facebook requesting info on the trip to Ypres for their CV or other job opportunities. Most recently, I was surprised by a message from a former student apologising for his rowdy behaviour in the former front-line town: 'I wasn't grown up enough at the time to react in a proper manner to such a morally and emotionally complex subject as World War I. In hindsight, however, the trip brought me a lot of good and I think I have learned a lot on a personal level also, precisely because my behaviour 'sucks' when I find certain things difficult to cope with.' Email from former student, sent in July 2018.

[204] From *Korengal* (2014), directed by Sebastian Junger.

[205] From *Restrepo* (2010), directed by Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger.

[206] McLoughlin (2011, 115) calls this boredom 'vigilance decrement.' She explains that 'losing interest [is] a function both of the passage of time (which appears to move slowly) and of the repetitiveness of activities performed within that time'.

[207] Explaining what inspired Turner to write some of his best war poetry, amongst which 'Here, Bullet' Turner comments; 'a year of boredom punctuated by intense events or moments. They might be two seconds or 36 hours. Then back to boredom.' For the soldier, and my pupils, it explains what Kidd call an 'eerie combination of terror and death-wish' (J. Kidd 2014).

[208] '"Did you kill anyone in the war?" His response is always the same: "1.2 million" – the estimated death toll of Iraqis since the US-led invasion in 2003' (J. Kidd 2014).

[209] Brian Turner and Aagje Rotgans during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[210] Radio interview with Bessel van der Kolk, www.onbeing.org/program/ restoring-the-body-bessel-van-der-kolk-on-yoga-emdr-and-treating-trauma/5801, last accessed 22-7-2016.

[211] Brian Turner during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[212] Hendrik Plukkel during 'Veteran in the Classroom.'

[213] On 22 March 2016, an IS bombing in Brussels claimed the lives of 32 civilians.

[214] These exams were mostly taken during their last test-week of their final year, 2015-2016.

[215] Blog written by Sara Hussein, school year 2015-2016.

[216] Blog written by Sami Ahmed, school year 2015-2016.

[217] Interview with Aagje Rotgans, Spring 2016.

[218] This was class Vwo6A in their final schoolyear 2019-2020, amongst which Bertus Leffef , Ceylin Khaled and Alberta Liefaard.

[219] https://www.theguardian.com/science/neurophilosophy/2011/sep/09/pregnant-911-survivors-transmitted-trauma, last accessed 01-08-2020.

[220] http://www.amstelveenweb.com/nieuws-Herdenkingsbijeenkomst-2019-bij-het-Nationaal-Mo&newsid=338377620, last accessed 01-08-2020.

[221] http://petallproject.eu/petall/index.php/en/what-s-it-for, last accessed 2-5- 2017.

[222] https://www.fgw.vu.nl/nl/nieuws-agenda/nieuwsarchief/2016/apr-jun/160609-vu-project-taalwijs-maakt-leerlingen-bewust-van-de-rol-van-taal-in-de-samenlevingnieuw-compon.aspx, last accessed 18-11-2020.

[223] https://www.trouw.nl/onderwijs/een-boek-lezen-pure-tijdverspilling-vinden-nederlandse-jongeren~bbcc2b5d/, last accessed 18-11-2020

Summary

This dissertation, *War in the Classroom*: *A Qualitative Model for the English Literature Curriculum* shows how war and trauma – past and present – are a pervasive presence in pupils' lives. And the realistic truth is that calamities and conflict will continue to play a big part in pupils' futures. Tucked away in every student's breast-pocket is a smart phone which relentlessly pushes daily narratives of conflict into their everyday reality: the poetry, films, blogs and songs of the wars we continue to wage, celebrate, and commemorate. This book proposes how secondary school teachers can overcome their anxieties about discussing sensitive topics such as war in the classroom. Rather than ignore these, it is important for the teacher to foreground these calamities and connect them to canonical and non-canonical multimodal literature in their classrooms.

This dissertation outlines how the forces in society, politics, and science aim to establish calm control in and of the conflicting world we live in. Each of these force fields seek out schools, as they are one of the last strongholds of collective memory and bastion of shared culture that can affect this. The way these force fields try to achieve this changes constantly. Politicians come and go, society rarely makes up its mind as a collective, and scholars are forever at loggerheads with each other. All frequently invade the classroom armed with myths of their own. At the moment of writing, some of them include that war needs to be addressed at school, that only veteran poets should be part of the classroom canon, that their poetry is largely anti-war and pacifist, that children are taught that this is the only valid reaction to and interpretation of war, and that teachers are largely to blame for this. This book shows how teachers can empower themselves vis-à-vis the force fields' influence by accepting the central role they play in maintaining and preserving society's collective cultural memory.

Teachers have an obligation to overcome their anxiety to act and engage with humanity's violent past and present. This dissertation will help them to do so. Though its focus is on English literature, this book is also valid for teachers of other subjects, such as Dutch, French, and German language and literature, and to a lesser extent history and social sciences. It is an answer to the widespread and urgent call for value-driven education. It is vital that its design happens within existing disciplines, instead of creating a separate secondary school discipline from this need, forcing existing subjects to cut time. This book shows how current curricula can be reshaped in such a way that they

accommodate and incorporate the concerns and demands of society, science, and politics. It shows that English literature, part of a larger English language and culture curriculum at secondary schools in the Netherlands, and war narratives specifically, is an appropriate platform to addressing the wider social, political, and scientific picture, involving current global conflicts.

This dissertation suggests a multimodal approach to literature in the classroom and will analyse poetry, prose, movies, and blogs; chronologically tracing art that has sprung from the ashes of the major wars of the 20th and 21st centuries, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and the War on Terror. Doing so broadens the required curricula extensively, moving beyond the remit of what is required of modern language and literature teachers in the Netherlands. However, this book shows that a different, more creative and expansive design of the (language) curriculum is urgently needed, to rise up to the increasing demands upon teachers, and the challenge of involving society's pressing issues of citizenship at schools, as well as being forerunner to the general curricular overhaul in the Netherlands. This book is aimed to function as a flywheel to achieve this. It suggests an extensive re-draft of the English language curriculum, emphasising the importance and strengthening the position of literature and literature education in schools.

Via a variety of interventions in the classroom I have designed literature curricula through which I will provide the temporal anchors to address war in the classroom. These have been marked out clearly in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation for the benefit of the time-pressed teacher-reader to draw upon in their ambition to establish versatile and up-to-date literature curricula themselves. Concretely, I have applied an array of literary interventions in the upper year classes of Dutch secondary education, aimed at pupils of 16 and above in their penultimate or final year at secondary school. In the Netherlands that implies a curriculum versatile enough to be taught at secondary school levels Mavo 4, Havo 5 and Vwo 6.[223] These pupils are closest to a soldier's age, on the brink of entrance to a university or army life as they are themselves. Teaching at this age would allow an instructor both more depth and width to the curriculum, including, for instance academic critique, politics' demands, and society's concerns.

Ultimately, the broad range of literary classroom interventions this dissertation describes culminates in a qualitative literary model for the English literature curriculum, as formulated in the conclusion. This is meant to serve as a guideline for the teacher-

reader of this book in their ambition to design their own literary interventions. This dissertation aims to motivate teachers to explore similar pathways, such as taking students on excursions to Ypres, venturing away from Owen to more diverse, non-canonical war poetry in the classroom (chapter 2), moving beyond Anne Frank's diary and visiting Bergen-Belsen with pupils (chapter 3), or as inspiration to putting Vietnam War Movies on the curriculum in troublesome classes (chapter 4), or even inviting a veteran to the classroom (chapter 5).

Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation argues how designing literature curricula, which integrate the landscape of war outside of the school walls, offers a chance to create the fixed, value-driven marks society so desperately seeks as a gateway to developing pupil-citizenship, develop individual Bildung and create empathy with pupils in the language classroom. It indicates why it is vital to establish a war literature curriculum that allows students to engage on their own terms, as well as how difficult it is to predict how pupils will engage with and react to war narratives they are introduced to. The wide variety of qualitative interventions described in this book, for different classes, using different forms and genres of war literature form hypotheses about their effect in the classroom. With these, this dissertation hopes to invite future quantitative research.

Chapter two, 'Canonisation in the Classroom: Inventing Tradition,' outlines the first, tentative and intuitive step in the classroom I made involving the downing of flight-MH17 in the classroom, by putting Anne Vegter and Siegfried Sassoon's poems on the curriculum, and to connect these with the centenary commemoration of World War I. The initial success of these lessons sparked an engagement with current affairs and literature. It fuelled my wish to delve back into the academic archive to broaden my outdated literary curriculum and in doing so formulate answers to the force-fields' most urgent concerns. The detailed analysis of the history of anthologising World War I poetry in this chapter is necessary to show that what we regard as the canon is strongly influenced by education. 'Canonisation in the Classroom: Inventing Tradition' outlines a series of five literary interventions which foreground the necessity of including pupils in curriculum design. The pupils' eagerness in helping to broaden the canon showed that they are particularly

susceptible to the authenticity of the veteran poets above all, and the violence that is portrayed in their texts. The literary interventions such as 'Adopt a War Poem' and 'One War Poem for All War' which activate pupils' responses and gives them agency show that literature facilitates (unexpected) answers to the force-fields' concerns.

Chapter three, 'Finding Anne Frank,' outlines how Anne Frank's *The Diary of A Young Girl* has moved and might still move beyond its time and form in the classroom. *The Diary*, much like the war poetry of Sassoon and Owen, is a crucial and dominant text in Holocaust literature, especially in education. Using my position as a scholar amongst teachers I further opened the archive of (children's) war literature and established interventions and links with the adult. Many opportunities for re-writing the potentiality of literature's power in the classroom lie outside the classroom, which is why the chapter describes the design of both an in-class and out-of-class intervention. The chapter shows that pupils' renewed introduction to reading *The Diary* was fraught with resistance and lack of motivation. Yet allowing pupils to rediscover and reappraise the canonical war narrative themselves and discussing this in peer-to-peer group sessions, strengthened pupils' autonomy, activated their intrinsic interests, and addressed their social motivation. 'Finding Anne Frank' shows that the equivocal distinctions between adult war literature and children's war literature are blurred: adult Holocaust literature and spatial narrative of a Nazi concentration camp enable this children's narrative to be reappraised and give voice to the pages that have been left blank. It is the terror adults tend to tread lightly around which attract and lure teenagers and make a lasting mark upon their memories.

Chapter four, 'Directing Scenes of War,' explains why the demands on teachers to formulate answers to crises and gain a certain control on calamity are so urgent. Zooming in on a Havo-class whose language and motivation levels were very low and upon whom the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015 had a ripple-effect, a segregated class already at loggerheads with each other. The boundaries between the zones of war and peace are more and more blurred in pupils' lives. By rebelling against the teacher and other force-field institutions as they did in my class, these students were implicitly pleading for Bildung, as I argue. This is why I opted for the most direct visual confrontation with violence and conflict possible: Vietnam war movies, which proves a popular form of choice with pupils, especially with cognitively and culturally diverse Havo-classes. They were unaccustomed to an innovative literary and visual curriculum like this, with clear

links to citizenship. The intervention makes something happen; these rebellious teenagers started to become engaged. The Vietnam War movie course offered extra-curricular possibilities, opening up the English literature curriculum to (war) movies, and establishes gateways to citizenship and *Bildung*. 'Directing Scenes of War' shows that visual war narratives have a particular power over pupils. Directing their scenes of war in class and their scenes of choice again showed an equal fascination with violence.

Chapter five, 'Pupils Craving for the Hurt Locker,' outlines my pupils meeting an Iraq war veteran and war poet and memoirist in the classroom. It foregrounds the same dynamics as previous out-of-class literary interventions: pupils unremitting thirst for the secrets of war. Visiting a site of memory and mourning sparks off an invaluable lasting memory and creates a living pupil testimony. The facilitation of an extra-curricular event is the cornerstone of the future literary curricula I suggest with this book. 'Pupils Craving for the Hurt Locker' shows how the event established intergenerational empathy within the Dutch classroom between pupils that were not just torn apart by different racial and social backgrounds, but by the Dutch system of early selection. Furthermore, aiming to provide my teacher-readers with a hands-on analytical tool for a class involved with (writers of) war narratives, chapter five provides a structured and detailed analysis of Kate McLoughlin's tropes of war (2011). A follow-up reading task, in which pupils were asked to read, analyse and talk about Iraq War Blogs, met with widespread resistance. 'Pupils Craving for the Hurt Locker' goes on to outline the design of a creative writing task from the urgent need to write the war back into the classroom, foregrounding the stories of refugee pupils in the classroom, but also those of my Dutch students and their impressions living in a climate of war. Writing their testimonies, my pupils created a sense of urgency and achieved a sense agency vis-à-vis the literature curriculum and external force-fields that seek to sway its course.

Chapter six, 'Concluding War in the Classroom,' concludes with concrete advice to the teacher-reader. Because not a single school, class, teacher and pupil is the same, the ten literary interventions outlined throughout the book will have to be applied to suit each and every singular teacher, class, setting and occasion. The curricular innovations do not offer a one-size-fits-all solution. More than anything else, teachers' and pupils' individual creativity needs to be called upon to either adapt their existing curricula or create new ones. However, every one of the ten interventions has integrated such teacher and pupil

engagement in their design. They lead to my introduction of a **ten-step literary model.** It is advised that the design of new literary interventions:

1. **Are multimodal,**
2. **Interdisciplinary,**
3. **Use canonical and non-canonical texts,**
4. **Draw a connection to societal concerns,**
5. **Are international, multicultural,**
6. **Draw from McLoughlin's tropes,**
7. **Include in-classroom and out-of-classroom interventions,**
8. **Seek for a connection with the force-fields,**
9. **Establish pathos formula;**
10. **These steps lead de facto to Bildung.**

This dissertation shows how literature proves to be the most powerful weapon an English teacher or indeed any language teacher can wield to address the sensitive issue of war. It shows that shown that more than any other place, the classroom allows for canon formation, selecting lesser known (war) narratives from the armoury of cultural memory by adding them to classroom curricula. Though my focus is purely on war literature, my qualitative model allows for easy thematic shifts to other pressing topics such as, for instance, racism, gender or climate change. Moreover, I explain how my (English) teacher-reader may integrate Dutch literature (in translation) in the curriculum. The literary curricular suggestions are not only multimodal and interdisciplinary. Furthermore, I show how visiting the battlefields and places of memory and mourning allows even further cross-curricular enterprises with subjects such as History, Geography, and the Arts.

Having shown the immeasurable power of literature, foregrounding it as a key weapon in the hands of teachers battling society, science and politics' problems, this disseration is an emphatic plea to stop cutting and start investing in the Humanities. This book shows it is necessary to reclaim the ever-growing lost territory with regard to secondary school students' ability to distinguish the validity of various sources and recognising real and fake news and their reading skills. The starting point to enhance and train the latter is reading motivation, which is, sadly, at an all-time low at the moment of writing. Yet hope can be garnered from this book, for if anything, war narratives have a

powerful appeal upon pupils, motivating them to read beyond the comfort zones of their mobile phones streaming their preferred filmic genre, and awakening their sorely missed motivation to read literature. This book advises to make literature more readily available to pupils, and to invest in teachers to grant them time to develop a literature curriculum following the lines of the ten-step model.

Political and classroom implications

The ten-step intervention is intrinsically connected to the state of the Humanities at universities, and it has political ramifications. Teachers need to be facilitated to develop literary language tasks with clear ties to delicate subjects the force fields of science, politics and society wishes education to deal with, Holocaust and War being the most necessary amongst these issues. These tasks will prove a vital asset in the battle against the sharp decline in teenagers reading literature and their general reading skills. Concretely, my advice is to facilitate and finance the broad formation of professional learning communities for teachers, led by teacher-researchers. These will prove the ideal place to disseminate the theory and literary interventions such as these in this book, as well as translate them to the individual professional and their school.

Furthermore, given the importance of pupil ownership via their own testimonial products, ranging from writing a war poem to creating their own film, these tasks travel well and underscore the necessity of an obligatory field trip to a 'Lieu des mémoire,' as Pierre Nora explains, 'the principal places or sites in which memory [is] rooted,' (Landsberg 2004, 6). An obligatory field trip to a place of memory and mourning needs to be added to the so-called 'kerndoelen' (core-goals) of Dutch education. Top-down governmental funding is both essential and egalitarian, for the extra financial impulse will enable all school denominations to participate, regardless of a school population's wealth or educational level. This in itself is an act of good citizenship and gives concrete opportunity to address the 'sensitive' issues at school. Furthermore, its frame will allow teachers to win over their sense of anxiety to address such contention issues, whereas a realising a broad national implementation will give rise to peer consultancy and conferencing. It will allow a variety of secondary school subjects to structurally interconnect and putting so-called 'core-subject' English and/or Dutch language and literature central to the trip and tasks will further bolster the Humanities.

From the gas-attacks of Ghouta to the Bataclan in Paris, from the commemorations of 'MH17' to World War I and II, from Iraqi refugees to Syrians now taking their place in Dutch classrooms, this book has shown that war invades the classroom in many guises. There will always be a current event of conflict a (language) teacher may address in his or her classes and curricula. The challenge lies in selecting the potential pathos formula narratives from and for these wars to trigger teenagers with, as well as finding a scholarly frame. And, importantly, teachers need to design a hands-on task for pupils to engage with that will allow them to reflect and come to terms with the subject at hand, as well as empower them in their blossoming role as future citizens. This is why it is essential for schools and teachers to create curricula that include the creative design of pupils' products. Their testimonies cannot be underestimated. This book advises to awaken the creative and thoughtful force of pupils, our future global citizens. In times of war, art should be the first thing on humanity's mind, and if not in the mind of our past and present leaders, then in those of the future, the pupils of today.